B.I.N.C.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

ITS ORIGIN & PROGRESS

NOW READY

I. THE RISE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH *7s. 6d. net*

Containing:

The Jewish People and their Faith
By The Rev. L. Elliott Binns, D.D.

The Earliest Christian Church
By The Ven. J. W. Hunkin, B.D., O.B.E., M.C.

Early Traditions about Jesus
By The Rev. J. F. Bethune-Baker, D.D., F.B.A.

The three parts are issued separately
2s. 6d. each

IN PREPARATION

II. THE EXPANSION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Containing:

The Conquest of the Ancient World
By The Rev. B. T. D. Smith, B.D.

The Church in Later History
By B. L. Manning, M.A.

The Church in England
By The Rev. F. J. Foakes-Jackson, D.D.

III. THE CHURCH OF TO-DAY

Containing:

The Church's Faith and Ideal
By The Rev. P. Gardner-Smith, B.D.

The Church's Worship
By F. C. Burkitt, D.D., F.B.A.

The Church's Task in the World
By The Rev. C. E. Raven, D.D.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

General Editor:

J. F. BETHUNE-BAKER, D.D., F.B.A.

Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity
in the University of Cambridge

I

THE RISE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Cambridge University Press
Fetter Lane, London

New York
Bombay, Calcutta, Madras
Toronto
Macmillan

Tokyo
Maruzen-Kabushiki-Kaisha

All rights reserved

270.1
B614r

THE RISE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

by
L. ELLIOTT BINNS
J. W. HUNKIN
and
J. F. BETHUNE-BAKER

1141

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1929

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CONTENTS

General Preface by the General Editor . *page* xi

PART I

THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THEIR FAITH

By The Rev. L. ELLIOTT BINNS, D.D.,
Vicar of Gedney

Chap. I. The Sources of our Knowledge . . *page* 3

II. The Semites 14

III. Hebrew Origins 27

IV. The Rise of the Prophets . . . 40

V. The Later Prophets 53

VI. The Rise of Judaism 66

VII. Judaism and Hellenism 80

VIII. Faith and Reason: Some Urgent Problems 92

IX. The Future (Eschatology) . . . 104

X. The Coming of Jesus Christ . . . 115

Bibliography 126

PART II

THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By The Ven. J. W. HUNKIN, B.D., O.B.E., M.C.,
Archdeacon of Coventry and Rector of Rugby

Author's Preface . . . . *page* 128

Chap. I. The Experience of the First Disciples . 129

II. The Theology of the First Disciples . 139

III. Opposition and Expansion . . . 150

IV. General Conditions in the Gentile World 161

V. The Main Points in the Teaching of St Paul: (1) Union with Christ and its Results 174

VI. The Main Points in the Teaching of St Paul: (2) Baptism and the Lord's Supper 184

Additional Notes:

(1) On the different traditions in the early Church with regard to the Institution of the Lord's Supper 194

(2) The Christian rites and 'the Mysteries' 196

VII. The Admission of the Gentiles and the Further Expansion of the Church . . 199

VIII. The Transmutation of First Hopes . 210

Chap. IX. The Daily Life of the Christian . *page* 220

X. From St Paul to St John: the Beginnings of Christian Philosophy . . . 232

Additional Notes:

(1) On the developement of the doctrine of the Spirit 242
(2) On the authorship and composition of the Fourth Gospel . . . 244
(3) On the Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel 246

PART III

EARLY TRADITIONS ABOUT JESUS

By The GENERAL EDITOR

Chap. I. What the Gospels are and how they came to be . . . . . *page* 253

II. The actual Life of Jesus as set out in Mark and Q 269

III. The Way of Life and the Way of Teaching chosen by Jesus 281

IV. What Jesus thought about GOD and the Kingdom of GOD 295

V. What Jesus thought about the World and Man's Place in it 310

Chap. VI. The Sermon on the Mount. . *page* 317

VII. The Narratives of Miracles. . . 329

VIII. The Crucifixion and the Resurrection. 344

IX. Popular Opinion about Jesus in His Lifetime 352

X. The Stories of the Birth and Childhood of Jesus. The Church and the Sacraments 365

GENERAL PREFACE

THE idea of this series of books originated with the Rev. P. Gardner-Smith, Fellow and Dean of Jesus College, Cambridge, who thought that many teachers of boys and girls would welcome a series of little books which severally might provide a term's work for their pupils, and taken all together, in sequence, supply them with the kind of knowledge of the Christian Religion and the Christian Church in the past that would explain to them the state of things by which they are confronted today.

We enlisted the help of Professor J. M. Creed and the Rev. J. W. Hunkin (now Archdeacon of Coventry), and the four of us together drafted the scheme and the syllabus of the different parts of it as a guide to the various writers, and have read each part. Each writer's treatment of the subject, of course, is his own, and some have not kept to the original scheme quite as closely as others have. But if we cannot hope that each part of the series will be found the most suitable book on its subject for use in Schools, we are confident that any one who reads through the three volumes will have acquired a true perspective of the whole subject and be able to form a sound judgement of the right and the wrong of many questions in dispute today. We hope, indeed, that what we have provided may be found of

interest and value to many who have left their school years far behind them.

Even among those who profess and call themselves Christians and are members of Christian Churches there is widespread uncertainty and doubt as to much that has been believed in the past and been reckoned a necessary part of the faith of a Christian, and again as to the possibility of carrying on life in the world as it is without being false to the ideals of Jesus at every turn. Yet the appeal that those ideals make comes as strongly as ever to men and women of all kinds everywhere today, and more of them than ever before are convinced that the solution of our present problems—individual and social, economic and international—is only to be found on lines that run parallel at least with the idealism of Jesus—love of GOD and love of Man.

Is Christianity a failure? Is it a case of "the high that proved too high?" and though it has claimed men's allegiance for nineteen hundred years, can it do so still? Is it still capable of being a guide to the right attitude to the world in which we find ourselves, the right way of thinking and feeling and living?

Everyone early in life ought to face these questions. But they cannot be answered by anyone who does not know what Christianity has been, how it came into being, what it had to contend with, and what it has achieved in the past.

This series of books is intended to supply sufficient knowledge of these things to suggest a reasonable answer.

The first volume gives a picture of the new society of Christians already in being, with its beliefs and its way of life, twenty or thirty years after it came into existence:—as soon, that is, as we have detailed evidence about it. To that is prefixed an account of the religious history of the Hebrew people among whom the new religion had its origin; and it is followed by a survey of the traditions about the personality and life and teaching of its Founder which were current in the society He brought into being in the early years of its existence, and since at least the middle of the second century have been regarded as inspired accounts of the actual facts.

The second volume will shew how the new religion made its way in the old world and overcame its rivals; and then will trace its history in the West and particularly in England, giving attention especially to such institutions and movements as have proved to be of lasting influence.

In the third volume the attempt is made to set out in its main features the faith of the Church in comparison with some of its rivals of today; to sketch the history of its worship with special reference to the English Book of Common Prayer; and finally to answer the question What is the Church's task in the world today?

The writers of these books are not among those who

think that *apologia* for Christianity is needed. Its chequered history shews great ideas and ideals fighting their way to a victory that has never yet been won, except for moments and by individuals. Always new conditions and new knowledge are setting would-be Christians new problems to solve. Christianity survives in the world because it has always been able to adapt itself to different conditions of knowledge and thought and life, assimilating much that was new and transfiguring it in turn. It is still a fighting Faith and a fighting Church, making converts all over the world, with which we have to deal. But it is to a quiet survey of its origins, its characteristics, and its history that readers of these volumes are invited.

J. F. BETHUNE-BAKER

Cambridge
23 *August* 1929

THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THEIR FAITH

By

L. ELLIOTT BINNS

CHAPTER ONE

THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE

FREDERIC THE GREAT of Prussia, who was somewhat loose in his religious opinions, is reported on one occasion to have asked his chaplain to give him, in as few words as possible, some clear evidence of the truth of Christianity. 'The Jews, your majesty', tersely replied the chaplain. Whether it be accepted as evidence for the truth of Christianity or not, the survival of the Jewish people is one of the most striking phenomena in history. They lost their national freedom on the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., but in spite of this they have remained a distinct race, although for nearly two thousand years without a land of their own. The early history of such a people must in itself be worthy of study. But if we wish to acquaint ourselves with the background of the life of Him who was, after the flesh, the greatest product of the Jewish people, and desire to understand the growth of the Church which He founded, such a study is essential. The Christian Church is rooted in Judaism, and the New Testament is the sequel, although on a higher plane, of the Old.

The story of the early years of Israel is lost amidst legend and folk-lore. Certain important events, however, like the Exodus, and certain great personalities, like Moses, stand out from amidst the general obscurity. In spite of this

uncertainty any account of the rise of the Hebrews must be full of interest; something much more enlightening than a mere chronicle accurate in the smallest details would have been, for the story itself is a living thing still bearing traces of the experiences of its writers.

Until about a century ago our sources of information for the history of the Jewish people were practically limited to the writings which they themselves had produced, the collection of books which we call the Old Testament. During the last century, however, a whole new field of knowledge has been made available for us by the labours of archaeologists, a full account of whose skill and daring, particularly in the early days, makes a thrilling narrative.[1] The principal result of their work has been to rescue the Hebrews from that state of isolation which a study of the Old Testament by itself makes almost inevitable. No longer do we see them living in a kind of vacuum, but moving against the vast background of the ancient Oriental world. All this is pure gain. The records lose nothing of their religious value, whilst the Hebrews become more human and, in consequence, of greater help to us who live in modern times.

The discoveries of the excavators have been made in almost every part of the ancient East, and they throw fresh light on almost every period of its long developement. They

[1] In a small booklet, *Modern Research and the Old Testament* (S.P.C.K.), I have given a brief outline of the story with descriptions of the more important discoveries.

disclose, in surprisingly vivid detail, the conditions amidst which the ancestors of the Hebrews lived in their distant homes 'beyond the river'; they tell us of Egypt from the days previous to the Exodus down to the centuries before the coming of Christ; they sketch for us the state of Palestine in the years when the Hebrews were pressing into it, and give us a knowledge of Canaanite civilization and of the religious influences which affected the followers of Jehovah, such as the Old Testament by itself does not afford.

Some of the evidence for the state of Palestine, and in particular for the religious customs of the Canaanites, comes as a result of excavations carried out at various sites in Palestine itself: the chief of these are Gezer, Taanach, Tell el-Hesy (the ancient Lachish) and Tell el-Mutesellim (the ancient Megiddo). Further evidence is to be found in the tablets discovered at Boghaz-Keui (the Hittite capital in Asia Minor), and, most important of all, in the Tell el-Amarna Letters. These tablets, some three hundred in number, form part of the state archives of Amenophis IV, a king (Pharaoh) of Egypt about 1350 B.C. They include letters received by him and his father from a most varied series of correspondents; of chief value are reports from various Egyptian representatives in Palestine. The letters as a whole throw many interesting, and even amusing, sidelights on the ancient world, and anyone who becomes familiar with their contents will feel a new respect and admiration for the civilization which produced them.

For the later periods of the history we have recovered not a few inscriptions of value: such are the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III upon which the messengers of Jehu are depicted bringing tribute to the Assyrian king; the edicts of Cyrus giving permission for exiled peoples to return to their homes; and, for the Persian period, tablets from Nippur shewing the social and commercial life of Jews living away from Palestine. Perhaps the most interesting of all the discoveries which give information of such Jews is that of the papyri found at Assuan near the first cataract of the Nile in the early years of the present century. They contain an account of a Jewish colony of the late fifth century settled quite happily in a strange land. These Jews had their own temple in which they worshipped not only Jehovah, but other deities, including goddesses, and, so far as we can tell, without any idea that they were doing anything unusual.

Unfortunately no Hebrew inscription of any value has yet been discovered, the nearest approach to one being the so-called Moabite stone, an inscription of Mesha, king of Moab (2 Kings iii, 4 f.), in which he describes, in language which might have been taken from the Old Testament, his victories over Israel.

These new discoveries, although they supplement the Old Testament, by no means supersede it, and to the Old Testament we must still turn for a record of the growth of the knowledge of God as it came to be revealed in the life of the Hebrew people.

The record, even if we do not accept the early narratives of Genesis as historical documents, covers a vast extent of time. From the wilderness period to the final loss of any vestige of independence in the days of Herod the Great is a period of over 1200 years, possibly a great deal more (see below, p. 38). To trace the course of the religious developement of the Jewish people through this great tract of time is a task beset with insuperable difficulties. For one thing our sources of information are seldom contemporary; a story which professes to represent the conditions of an early age may be in reality the product of a much later time which read back into the past the ideas of its own period. Again it has to be remembered that religious developement in any people is seldom or never uniform. Different sections of the people will have reached at any given date very different levels of religious attainment. This is true of ourselves today, it is still more true of a country like India, it was certainly true of Palestine. In the big towns foreign influences worked much more speedily as well as more radically than in the country villages; the prosperous north was more open to such influences than the rugged and less accessible south. We have therefore to be on our guard against attributing to the nation as a whole ideas and ideals which were the possession of only a few of its members.

Before proceeding to discuss in greater detail the Old Testament records, it is necessary to say something of the methods of ancient historians, methods very different from those of scholars today. The modern historian prepares

for his task by collecting all available information. He then proceeds to write his history in his own words, or if he quotes from his sources or from other writers, he signifies it by the use of quotation marks. Before, however, accepting the evidence of any source he enquires into its reliability: he asks when, where, and by whom it was written, what were the means of information at the author's disposal, was he prejudiced, and so forth. The answers to such questions can seldom be either full or completely satisfactory, and ultimately the historian must rely on his own judgement: none the less the enquiry must first be made. In ancient times this process of criticism, as we call it, was hardly ever applied; the writers of the Old Testament in particular seemed quite unable to discriminate even between contradictory accounts of the same event: in some cases they simply placed the two side by side (e.g. the accounts of the creation in Gen. i and ii), sometimes they went further and tried to combine them, whilst still retaining the contradictions (e.g. the story of the deluge in Gen. vi, 5–ix, 17). Again, the ancient historian, instead of recasting his material in his own words, preferred to incorporate it, with but slight alteration, in the narrative, without any sign, such as inverted commas, to shew that it did not come from his own pen.[1] Furthermore, we have to

[1] Those who wish to study further the methods of ancient historians should consult A. H. Sayce, *The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotos*, pp. 176 ff. and also E. R. Bevan, *Historical Methods in the Old Testament* in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, pp. 1 ff.

remember that the writers of the Old Testament were not writing history for its own sake—they did not indeed claim to be writing history at all—everything was done to illustrate the dealings of Jehovah with His people and to enforce certain religious ideas. Hence, like many medieval churchmen, they included anything that was of service to this end and never stopped to ask if it were true or not: edification and not history, as we understand it today, was the end in view. It followed that much that was of value from a secular point of view was neglected. A good illustration of this neglect is the treatment of the reign of Omri, one of the most important of Israelite kings in the eyes of foreigners, but in the eyes of his own chroniclers worthy of little more than a bare mention. So too the early writers were careless to inform us about details, especially of exact names. The habit of referring merely to 'Pharaoh' (i.e. the king) has caused much confusion (e.g. if we knew the name of the Pharaoh of the Exodus the date of that event would be settled). It is quite possible that as the tradition came down no name was actually mentioned, just as a medieval story might be handed on about the 'Emperor', without specifying which Emperor was meant.

The Old Testament is not a single book but a collection coming from many different authors and from very varied periods. In all probability the traditions which it contains, and especially those which deal with the earlier periods, existed in an oral form before being reduced to writing. We can imagine the Hebrews gathered round

their camp fires listening to one of their number as he told stories of the past. Before the different tribes were united to form a single nation each of them would already have its own cycle of legends: after the union, no doubt, these stories would tend to become the property of the whole people. This accounts for a great many of the differences in detail in the Old Testament stories. Many of the most primitive of them are connected with famous shrines, probably these would be told to the pilgrims as they went up to the great festivals at those shrines.

The Old Testament, as we know it, is a collection of books. The Hebrews themselves had it in the form of three collections: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The books in the English Bible do not follow the order of the original Hebrew Bible, but that of the Vulgate, or Latin version. The first collection was the Law. This consisted of the same five books as in our version but at first they were not given the name of Moses.[1] Behind these five books, often referred to as the Pentateuch, lie many different traditions. Scholars have arranged these traditions into a number of separate groups or sources, which for convenience of reference are called by different letters. J, for example, represents the group of traditions which came from the south; this source uses the personal name for GOD, JHVH (the original pronunciation has been lost,

[1] The book which Hilkiah found in the Temple (2 Kings xxii, 8) was simply called 'a law book': contrast 'the book of Moses' in Neh. xiii, 1.

it was perhaps Yahweh or Yahu, certainly not Jehovah, which was a late invention of the Christian era).[1] E is a group of similar stories from the north; in it the word *Elohim* (= God in a plural form) is substituted for the personal name. D represents the school of Deuteronomy, that is, the followers of the eighth-century prophets whose teaching is summarized in Dt. xii–xxvi (see further, pp. 57 f. below). P is the symbol of the later priestly school of writers which gave to the books their final form.

The second of the collections in the Hebrew Bible is that of the Prophets. This has two divisions, the Former and the Latter, each consisting of four books. To the Former belonged, strangely to us who speak of historical books, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings: to the Latter, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and (not Daniel but) the Twelve (i.e. the minor prophets regarded as a single book).

The third collection, the Writings, contained the rest of the Scriptures. It included poetic books such as Psalms and the Song of Songs; historical books such as Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles (the last book in the Hebrew Bible); books dealing with philosophical problems such as Job and Ecclesiastes, as well as stories like Ruth, Esther, and Daniel.

After the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. the Jews were widely dispersed and came under many different

[1] The earliest form of the name is simply YV (perhaps pronounced as Yaw). See further A. E. Cowley, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1920), pp. 175 f.

influences and some of them adopted foreign ways. In Alexandria, after a time, they ceased to speak the Hebrew language and Greek was used even in religious matters. To provide for the needs of these Greek-speaking Jews the Old Testament, beginning with the Law, was translated. But an inspired volume, so it was supposed, cannot be translated except by people possessing an inspiration equal to that of the original writers (that is why orthodox Moslems will not allow the Koran to be translated). To meet this difficulty, and to put their version on the same level as the Hebrew original, the Jews of Alexandria invented the legend that the Law had been translated by seventy different scholars and that their renderings were identical, a sure proof of inspiration. In consequence of this tradition the whole of this version is known as the Septuagint (LXX). It differs from the Hebrew in numerous places but chiefly by including a number of books and parts of books which had been written later and are now called Apocryphal. These books are of great value as giving insight into the life and thought of later Judaism. Some, such as 1 and 2 Maccabees, contain historical information; others, such as Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, deal with religious problems. We should be very much poorer if the LXX had not handed them down to us.

In addition to these Apocryphal books which are received by the Church as part of the Bible, a number of writings have survived which are also of great value for the latest period of Jewish history. Such books as Jubilees, the

collection known as Enoch, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are exceedingly valuable. More will be said about them when we come to deal with the later developements of Jewish thought.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

S. R. Driver. *Modern Research as illustrating the Bible.* (Oxford University Press.)

R. A. S. Macalister. *A Century of Excavation in Palestine.* (Religious Tract Society, London.)

W. Robertson Smith. *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church.* (2nd ed.) (Black.)

A. T. Chapman. *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Camb. Bible).

D. C. Simpson. *Pentateuchal Criticism.* (Hodder & Stoughton.)

Essays V and VI in *The People and the Book.* (Oxford.)

W. O. E. Oesterley. *The Books of the Apocrypha.* (3rd ed.) (R. Scott.)

The Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Books of the Old Testament. (Oxford.) Ed. R. H. Charles and others. Separate editions of some of these, in English, are published by the S.P.C.K.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SEMITES

AMONG the legends which go to make up the early chapters of Genesis there is one which professes to give an account of the various races which inhabit the earth. After the Flood, so the story goes, the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, the sons of Noah, overspread the earth (ix, 18 f.). From Shem were descended the children of Eber (i.e. the Hebrews) as well as other nations. The list in Gen. x, 21 ff. is difficult to understand since it includes Elam and Lud (Lydia) who were certainly not of the same race as the rest, whilst it omits Canaan and Zidon who were. The whole scheme is an artificial genealogy designed to account for existing facts and probably some kind of geographical arrangement underlies it.

It is, however, sufficiently accurate to enable historians to give to the so-called descendants of Shem (including Canaan and Phoenicia but excluding Elam and Lud) the name Semites. Since the Jewish people are part of the Semitic race and since at every stage of their history ideas and customs inherited from the remote past can be recognized, in tracing out their developement we must go back to their Semitic forefathers so far as information is available.

Through the labours of archaeologists and others our knowledge of the primitive Semites has become, during the past few generations, much more ample than it was before: but additional information has served to make the story more complex and on not a few points there is much uncertainty.

The original home of the Semites was probably Arabia, that vast peninsula which has at all times been notable as a breeding ground of men. But if Arabia is famous for producing men, it produces little else. The quickly multiplying tribes of the desert are therefore ever seeking to invade the fertile lands which, like a vast crescent stretching from Egypt down to the Persian Gulf, hem them in. At certain widely separated intervals there is, it would seem, a noticeable drying up of the oases which largely provide for the nomads and their flocks: this causes migration on a vast scale, and some historians think that they can perceive, at intervals of about a thousand years, the recurrence of such movements. The sudden appearance of hordes of unknown peoples has time and again wrought an unexpected change in the fortunes of nations and altered the whole course of history: we need but think of the Gauls, the Huns, and the Tartars. With similar effect these resistless waves of Semites poured out of Arabia.

The first wave must have occurred before the dawn of history, since from the earliest times Semitic peoples are found in North Babylonia. This wave, which we may date approximately in 4000 B.C., probably amalgamated with

the native peoples of North Babylonia to form the Assyrians. It then flowed south and for a time, under the famous Sargon of Agade, overran the Sumerians, an ancient people who had perhaps come from Central Asia. Another wave followed in the middle of the next millennium, and again the Sumerians, whose cities had in the meantime undergone a brilliant revival, were the sufferers. In another direction it went down into Syria to form the Canaanites, finally spending itself upon Egypt, whose records bear testimony to a number of raids by Semites between the VIIth and XIIth dynasties, culminating in the conquest of the land by the Hyksos who ruled it from 1800 to 1580 B.C.

According to their own traditions the Hebrew peoples began their career when a certain Abram migrated from Ur, doubtless the city near the head of the Persian Gulf where excavations have recently been carried out. He moved first to Haran in Syria and thence southwards, penetrating even into Egypt before returning to make a final settlement in Canaan.[1] We hear of further expeditions down to Egypt by his descendants and finally of a lengthy

[1] Abram may have left Ur because of changes in religion. The worship of Sin, the moon-god, was abolished by Hammurabi at Babylon in favour of that of Shamash, the sun-god. Ur was a famous sanctuary of Sin, as was Haran to which Abram first journeyed. It would seem that the primitive Hebrews were moon-worshippers. By a further coincidence their sacred mountain (Sinai) also bore the name of Sin. See further C. F. Burney, *Judges*, pp. 249 ff.

sojourn there by some of them. All these traditions seem to be echoes of the events outlined above, for, as the lists in Gen. x, 21 ff. shew, the Hebrew writers were in the habit of personifying tribes. We must therefore regard the narratives of the patriarchs as describing, not the movements of individual chiefs with a small band of followers, but widespread migrations affecting large areas and lasting probably for centuries.

A third wave occurred about 1350 B.C. when the Hebrews and other allied peoples pressed down into Palestine. The Tell el-Amarna Tablets, which refer to this period, contain many references to the incursions of the Habiru (i.e. Hebrews). The word Hebrew is not derived from a mythical Eber, as the Old Testament writers in their desire for personification supposed (Gen. xi, 14 ff.), but really means 'those from the other side' (i.e. of the river Euphrates), and it would seem to have been given to the original Hebrews by the people amongst whom they came. Strictly speaking, the whole of the descendants of 'Eber' are Hebrews, so that Midianites and Edomites have as much right to the name as the offspring of Jacob, but in actual practice the word came to be limited to the latter.

Again a thousand years went by, and sometime before 312 B.C. the territories east of Jordan were invaded by the Nabateans, a small movement in comparison with those which had gone before, but having important consequences in as much as it drove the Edomites into the territory of the Jews and led eventually to their absorption in that nation.

The last great Semitic wave belongs to a time later than our period: when it came, and again some thousand years had elapsed, it took the form of a great religious movement, and the followers of Mohammed not only conquered Syria and North Africa but threatened the whole of Europe.

The Semitic peoples are commonly divided up into four groups according to their geographical situation. To the south are the Arabs; to the east the great Mesopotamian powers, Babylon and Assyria; to the north the Syrians (or more correctly the Aramaeans); to the west the Phoenicians and Hebrews. In spite of occasional extensions such as those of the Phoenicians and the later developements of Islam, the Semites, as a whole, have been strangely afraid of venturing far from the North Syrian desert which has in all ages been the centre round which they have been grouped. One reason for their clinging to a comparatively small area is their inability to live in any but a hot climate, another is their instinctive dislike of the sea.

Such then is in outline the story of the rise of the Semitic peoples. We must turn now to consider the race as a whole and attempt to describe its distinctive features. This task is difficult with any people, since these are liable to alteration through the lapse of centuries and the consequent changes of environment. With the Semites it is perhaps less difficult than with other branches of the human family, for they have ever been tenacious of their customs and of their language (important evidence for national characteristics), and even their physical type has been strangely persistent.

Furthermore, in Arabia little change took place before the rise of Islam. There the nomads have remained with but little mixture of alien stocks and exposed but little to outside influences. It follows that the Arabs of the generations before Mohammed, even though they belong to the Christian era, provide better evidence for early Semitic beliefs and customs than the ancient Babylonians. These latter, in conquering the Sumerians, were enormously affected by the culture and religious customs of the conquered. The great principle enunciated by Robertson Smith, a pioneer in this line of study, should be borne in mind: 'in matters of this sort, ancient and primitive are not synonymous terms'.

What then are the characteristics of the Semitic peoples? First of all, they are to be placed among the active rather than the contemplative races of mankind; their emotions are easily aroused and so their activities often depend on impulse, especially the impulse which comes from eloquence. To this trait must be attributed not only the reckless generosity which marks the Semites but also their occasional outbursts of ferocious cruelty. But whilst they are energetic and brave, they lack the power of endurance: they can rise to a great effort, but once the effort has been made, if it fails, disillusionment seems swiftly to follow.

Another characteristic is a deep racial pride. This tends to shew itself especially in regard to the narrow circle of the clan or family, and has not seldom stood in the way of

wider unities. It shews itself also in a tendency to despotism, which is not unnatural in a race which continually breeds outstanding personalities.[1] Finally there is a spirit of restlessness, perhaps to be expected in the blood of those who are either nomads themselves or the descendants of a long line of nomads. The ceaseless movement from one pasture-ground to another during the centuries has stamped itself upon the Semite, and even when he has left the desert for 'the sown', and settled down to agriculture, he must still from time to time go forth and raid his neighbours.[2]

Finally the Semites, speaking generally, are lacking in originality, especially in their culture. They prefer massive effects rather than beauty, and their artistic achievements, at any rate in Mesopotamia, fell far short of those of their Sumerian predecessors: whilst even in religion they were content to assimilate rather than to invent.[3]

These various characteristics of the Semitic mind naturally find expression in their religious ideas and customs. Taken as a whole, Semitic religions are remarkable for their simple and practical nature. Those who practise

[1] Democracy has never flourished among Semitic peoples: even the Phoenicians were undemocratic in their political organization, as at Carthage.

[2] This habit is by no means peculiar to Semites: it marked the early days of Rome when 'a raid upon neighbouring territory was almost a normal Latin way of occupying the idle months between harvest and the time of sowing': *Camb. Anc. Hist.* VII, 400.

[3] See C. L. Woolley, *The Sumerians*, pp. 77, 179. (Oxford.)

them do so with a directness and fervour which is a reflexion of their racial character. In early days there was little curiosity as to any life beyond the present—in this they were very different from the Egyptians who seemed to be obsessed with the idea of the Future Life—and the grave was at best a gloomy region where shadows dwelt in a miserable existence. The Semites then were intensely practical in their religion, but at the same time they were not without a touch of idealism, a characteristic which made them especially conscious of failure and shortcoming; that feeling which in the higher types of religion we call a sense of sin.

The religion of primitive man, in whatever part of the world he may chance to be found, shews many striking similarities. As he developes, variations, both of ritual and of belief, begin to appear as different conditions and influences are encountered. Even practices and ideas which we usually speak of as typically Semitic probably had their origin in earlier stages of the oriental world, and are not without their parallels in other contemporary races, especially those living around the Mediterranean basin. A belief in the presence of gods in springs, or trees, for example, is widespread, as well as the custom of sacrifice, and the holding of wild and licentious festivals.

A good deal of our knowledge of the early beliefs and customs of the Semites comes from the Old Testament itself, though in most cases the early, superstitious element in the stories has been toned down by later editors:

enough, however, remains to enable us to recover fresh illustrations of Semitic religion.

The first religious ideas were probably connected with the powers behind nature as they were manifested in the various processes which resulted in harvest and the increase of living things. Man was always surrounded by spirits whom he could not afford to ignore. To these beings, localized in certain places and objects, the Semites gave the name of El, a name which survived in Hebrew, and is used of the supreme GOD Himself, as also of lesser spiritual beings.

It was the belief of Robertson Smith that in its earliest stages religion among the Semites had a totemistic element. A totem is usually an animal supposed to be the home of the god, and therefore to be worshipped by the tribe which might call itself by the name of the totem, or even claim to be descended from it. The presence both of tribes and also of individuals amongst the Israelites who bore the names of animals, together with the fact that even as late as the period of the Exile animals were secretly worshipped in the temple (Ezek. viii, 10 ff.), gives some support to this view.

The god was regarded as a member of the tribe and probably in some cases as its father in the actual physical sense (Gen. vi, 4). It followed that no other god could be worshipped without disloyalty. But though every people believed in the reality of the gods of their neighbours just as much as in the reality of their own, a god could only be worshipped normally in his own land: cf. David's com-

plaint that Saul was sending him forth to worship other gods (1 Sam. xxvi, 10: cf. Ruth i, 14 ff.). Since the god was a member of the tribe, he joined with them in their warfare, being represented by some outward symbol such as the ark of the Hebrews (1 Sam. iv, 7 ff.).

Although the god and his worshippers were often held to be akin, the gap between them was usually felt to be great, and mankind cowered in the presence of the divine.[1] It naturally followed that anything belonging to the god was 'holy', that is, separated from common use. It must be remembered that in its earliest use this word had no ethical connotation, it is only as our ideas of what is fitting in regard to GOD have been purified that 'holy' has come to mean pure and good.

Common to all Semitic religions was the worship of one or more goddesses, the Ishtar of the Babylonians, the Queen of Heaven of the Hebrews (Jer. xliv, 17 ff.). Traces of her can be found in the Old Testament in the name Ashtoreth. As late as the fifth century, Jews in Egypt, with every apparent belief in their own orthodoxy, worshipped in their temple at Elephantine not only Jehovah but also other deities including Anath-Jau: that is Anath, the consort of Jau (i.e. Jehovah).

Lesser spirits, both good and evil, had their place in the beliefs of the Semites. From the earliest times evil spirits or demons were held to exist, and the belief had already

[1] In Islam (the word means 'submission') we have the logical conclusion of the Semitic attitude.

found acceptance among the Sumerians. Later Semitic thought is full of such beings, and even the extravagances of *The Arabian Nights* exaggerate but slightly the attitude of the common people. Even in the Old Testament there are still traces of mysterious demons such as Lilith (Is. xxxiv, 11 f.) and Azazel, the demon of the wilderness to whom the scapegoat was dedicated (Lev. xvi), as well as of demigods (Gen. vi, 4). There can also be but little doubt that in the original story of Jacob at the ford of Jabbok (Gen. xxxii, 24 ff.) his assailant was a night demon (he had to fly before daybreak), the spirit who haunted the ford.[1]

A few words must be devoted to the customs of worship among the Semites. These were very simple. Wherever a deity had manifested his presence, in a well or a tree, or by some exhibition of power, such as a lightning stroke, altars were erected. There was no regular priesthood (even in Israel this was a late developement), the sacrifices being offered by the worshipper or by the head of the family. Beside the altar pillars or stones were erected, and perhaps rudely carved images. Among the settled peoples festivals were held at stated intervals to mark the progress of agricultural operations. As to the origin of sacrifice many theories are held. The institution may have begun with the idea that gods, like men, needed food and drink. Akin to

[1] In Lev. xvi the Authorized Version renders Azazel by the word 'scapegoat' and so conceals any reference to the demon. The Revised Version translates correctly.

this theory is that which regards the offering as a common meal in which the god and his worshippers take part and so strengthen the bond between them. Another theory regards the sacrifice as a kind of tribute such as would be paid to an earthly king. These two theories of the origin of sacrifice were capable of developement to higher ideas, but often enough the sacrificial offering was little more than a bribe intended to keep the god in good humour, so that he would refrain from doing damage to the offerers or their possessions (the belief in gods who are capable of doing wanton injuries is still found in the Old Testament: see 1 Sam. vi, 19; 2 Sam. vi, 7; 2 Kings xvii, 24 ff.).

The beginnings of Semitic religion thus go back into remote antiquity: its later developements in the great religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, directly influence the modern world. But though these three religions trace back their origins to individual teachers, behind the founders lies what Robertson Smith has called 'the old religious tradition...into which successive generations of the Semitic race grew up as it were instinctively, taking it as a matter of course that they should believe and act as their fathers had done before them'. With these old beliefs the newer religions had to make their account, rejecting here and assimilating there, but always affected by the old. To the less well instructed the attraction of the old was always potent, hence the 'backsliding' which called forth the constant denunciations of the Hebrew prophets.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

J. L. Myres. *The Dawn of History*. (Home Univ. Library.)

S. A. Cook. *The Semites* (C.A.H. 1, 181 ff.).

W. Robertson Smith. *The Religion of the Semites*. (3rd ed.) (Black.)

G. A. Barton. *A Sketch of Semitic Origins*.

E. O. James. *A Comparative Study of the Old Testament* (New Commentary, pp. 659 ff.).

J. G. Frazer. *The Golden Bough*. (3rd ed.)[1] (Macmillan.)

J. G. Frazer. *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*. (Macmillan.)

G. B. Gray. *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*. (Oxford.)

[1] The volumes of the third edition bear various titles, such as *Adonis*, *Attis*, *Osiris*, etc.

CHAPTER THREE

HEBREW ORIGINS

THE story of the Hebrews begins in Egypt, whither some of the tribes had gone down to escape from famine in Canaan. Hebrew tradition held that all the tribes were in Egypt, but it is safer to suppose that only a part were there, and that during the long interval between the events themselves and their being put into writing, traditions belonging to a few of the tribes were referred to the nation as a whole. In considering this question we get but little help from Egyptian inscriptions. They record, however, that the *'Aperiu*, who probably included the Hebrews among them, were slaves in the land. But since *'Aperiu* are found in Egypt in the time of Ramses IV (1172–1166 B.C.) they cannot be identified with the Hebrews unless some of the latter had failed to make good their escape. A further difficulty lies in the fact that there is a reference to *Ysirael* in Canaan about 1220 B.C., this reference is, I think, to tribes who either never left Canaan or who had escaped before the others.

The Exodus was preceded by a time of fierce oppression, and it was only after many vicissitudes of fortune that the Hebrews, under their great leader Moses, succeeded in escaping from 'the land of bondage'. As a child Moses had been brought up in the household of Pharaoh's daughter,

but the sympathy which he felt for his oppressed countrymen led him on one occasion to step in and protect one of them from the cruelty of an Egyptian: in the struggle the oppressor was slain and nothing was left to Moses but to seek safety in flight. He went to Midian and there remained for some years until the call came to him to free the people. With the call there went a fresh revelation of Jehovah, to whose sacred mountain he had been led as he followed his flock.

The flight of the Hebrews from Egypt had been preceded by a series of disasters to the Egyptians, which culminated in the mysterious death of the first-born. The panic of the Egyptians and their superstitious fear allowed the fugitives to get away without any immediate attempt to stop them. But the Pharaoh quickly recovered and a detachment of light troops was sent in pursuit. When the Israelites saw that they were being pursued they in their turn gave way to panic, but Moses led them through a marshy lake (the 'sea of reeds' it is invariably called in the Old Testament) and got them safely to the other side. In this they were aided by a strong wind which providentially blew back the waters.[1] The Egyptian chariots which attempted to follow them were soon in difficulties in the boggy ground,

[1] A similar incident is recorded in the career of Cyrus (*Camb. Anc. Hist.* VI, 6) who was enabled to cross the Euphrates by the shifting of the wind: also of Alexander the Great when the sudden turning of the wind enabled his army to wade round Mount Climax (*Camb. Anc. Hist.* VI, 364). In each case the changing of the wind was taken as a sign of the divine favour.

and, the wind dropping, the waters flowed back and drowned many of them before they could get back to the shore. This incident, regarded as an exhibition of the power of Jehovah, the god of Moses, deeply impressed the people, and the escape from Egypt became the type and pattern of every other deliverance (Mic. vii, 15; Jer. xxiii, 7).

The people continued their journey to Sinai,[1] and there Israel and Jehovah were united on the basis of a covenant. Hitherto god and people had been regarded as of one kin, and therefore linked together by a natural bond: relationship by covenant was a new thing in religion and marked a great advance, since its basis was moral and ethical. It seems probable that Jehovah was originally the god worshipped by Jethro the Midianite, who, as a descendant of Abraham, may well have retained the religion which his kinsmen had lost in the bondage of Egypt. There followed a period during which the tribes wandered in the neighbourhood of Kadesh. The meaning of Kadesh is 'sanctuary', and the place was no doubt the religious centre which held the tribes of the confederation together.[2] After

[1] The actual position of Sinai is very doubtful, since the various statements in the Old Testament for the most part require a site near Kadesh or Edom. Probably a number of traditions, referring to different sites, have been combined. In any case the location in the so-called Sinai peninsula is not found before the third century A.D. See further S. R. Driver, *Exodus* (Camb. Bible), pp. 186 ff.

[2] Confederations based on a common sanctuary are familiar phenomena among primitive tribes (e.g. the Latins): sometimes the use of the same sanctuary seems to have led to political union.

an indefinite period (the forty years of the Old Testament) a serious attempt was made to invade Canaan. But the leader to whose courage and wisdom the people owed their unity (such as it was) was fated to die before the actual entry had been made.

With Moses we feel for the first time that we are in touch with a real person and that history has begun. No doubt legends have gathered round his name, just as in the case of Alfred the Great, but none the less he is real. He seems profoundly to have impressed the tribes who were in Egypt, and they were probably the most important members of the confederation. Moses is known chiefly as a lawgiver, and justly so, for although we cannot for a moment suppose that all the laws attributed to Moses were actually his work, yet unless there had been a considerable nucleus around which the rest could be gathered the tradition would never have arisen. Much of the work of Moses was in the nature of codifying (to adopt a modern term), the gathering together of already existing material into an ordered system.

It was, however, as a religious teacher or prophet that Moses primarily deserves the gratitude of mankind, and an attempt to give a short summary of the faith of the Hebrew people as instructed by him must now be made.

The object of the nation's worship was the GOD who had revealed Himself at Sinai. Some Hebrew writers think that even before that event Jehovah had been known to the Hebrews by name (Gen. xii, 1), but they were by no means

agreed upon the point (Ex. vi, 3). Like other Semitic peoples, they believed in the existence of the gods of their neighbours, and the possibility that they might be worshipped by Israelites was guarded against in the first of the ten commandments. The religion of the people in the desert was no doubt fierce and sanguinary: but it contained within it the germs of high moral achievement, and of a purer and nobler conception of GOD. Its high character was due to the teaching of Moses, teaching which he claimed had come to him from Jehovah Himself. Later ages see no reason for questioning the substantial truth of his claim. For whatever may have been 'the process by which Moses became possessed of the principles embodied in the Law, they may justly be regarded as derived from God. The best warrant for the Divine commission with which he professed to be invested is the character of the work which he accomplished'.[1] The depth and character of this work was speedily to be tested by the entry into the promised land.

Before considering the story of the conquest of Palestine a brief sketch of its geographical features will be useful. In its widest sense the name Palestine covers the territory between Edom in the south and Lebanon in the north. By a narrower usage it stretches 'from Dan to Beersheba', a distance of some 140 miles. At its widest extent, in the south, it measures 90 miles, but in the north it is only 25 miles across. The land as a whole is not a rich one, but a

[1] G. W. Wade, *Old Test. Hist.* p. 164. (Methuen.)

few parts of it (e.g. the plain of Esdraelon and the Jordan valley) are very fertile. Most of it, however, is barren, and will only yield its products to immense efforts of cultivation. It is a country of mountains but of few rivers, Jordan and Kishon being the only considerable streams: the water supply therefore comes for the most part from springs and wells. The climate is very varied, corresponding with a variety in physical formation. This aspect of Palestine has been strikingly presented by C. F. Kent.

> A half-day's journey brings the traveller from the winter snows of Jerusalem to the tropical luxuriance of the Jordan valley, and another day of travel will introduce him to the barren wastes of the Arabian desert. From certain vantage-points one may see the columns of vapour rising from that great cauldron, the Dead Sea, and with almost the same glance behold the snowy heights of Mount Hermon. The temperate, tropical, and frigid zones are each represented.... Corresponding to these differences in climate are the contrasts in flora and fauna. The firs overshadow the palms. Here the wolf of the north contends with the leopard of the south over the carcass of the gazelle of the temperate zone. It is evident why the Bible is a book intelligible to people living in all climes, since the land which is its background is an epitome of the entire world.[1]

As a training ground for a people who were destined to play a prominent part in the religious history of mankind nothing better could have been found: for Palestine, standing as it does on the bridge which connects Asia and Africa, is at once secluded and yet not isolated.

The people who lived in Palestine were, like the Hebrews

[1] *Hist. of the Hebrew People*, I, 23 f. (Scribners.)

themselves, of Semitic stock; the Old Testament gives lists of various nations, but they were probably for the most part Canaanites. This people had developed a comparatively high civilization in which Egyptian and Babylonian influences had been combined with a certain amount of native culture. They lived in walled cities and, if we can trust the accounts which the Egyptians give of the spoils captured from them, were luxurious in their tastes and possessed of sufficient wealth to indulge them. But the land, as described by the Tell el-Amarna Tablets, was full of disorder and internally weak.

Three distinct traditions of the conquest have been preserved in the Old Testament. Writers after the Exile give an ideal account of what the conquest should have been like: they describe the speedy subjugation of the whole land by a united Israel (such as did not exist until generations later) and the partition of the territory among the several tribes (Josh. xiii–xxiv). The account of the Deuteronomic school is similar though not quite so idealized: by it two campaigns are required, one in the north and the other in the south (Josh. i–xii). The earliest and most probable account is given in Judges i–ii, 5; according to this account the various tribes go forth each to conquer a territory for itself, and meet with but partial success (cf. Ex. xxiii, 30; Deut. vii, 22).[1]

[1] The possibility, or even probability, of a preliminary victory by the united tribes over an allied force of Canaanites must not, however, be ignored.

There can be but little doubt that the actual conquest of Palestine was a long process, and that most of the progress was made, not so much by arms, as by alliance and even by amalgamation with Canaanites. The Israelite tribes of Asher and Gad appear actually to be named after pagan deities. It will be remembered that in the genealogy which the Hebrew writers invented according to their custom (cf. p. 17) to account for the rise of their nation some of the tribes are the descendants, not of the full wives of Jacob, but of concubines. It is probable that in this distinction we have a recognition of the fact that these tribes were not pure-blooded Israelites but a mixture of Israelites and Canaanites.

The actual entry, according to Hebrew tradition, was by way of Jericho, that is from the east. The more obvious way from Kadesh was from the south, and there are not wanting traces of an attempt, which may have been more successful than the Old Testament writers in general admit, to enter from that quarter (see Num. xxi, 1–4, with the present writer's note in West. Com.). The later tribe of Judah which seems to have had an element of non-Israelite blood in it (e.g. Caleb and Othniel) may well have come up from the south by way of Hebron (cf. Judg. i, 8 ff.). It should be remembered that for a long time Judah was hardly considered part of Israel, and in the Song of Deborah (Judg. v) it is simply ignored, receiving neither praise for joining in the war nor blame for failing to come to the help of Jehovah. The Canaanites long after the original conquest still held a

line of strong fortresses including Jerusalem, Aijalon, and Gezer, which cut off Israel from the south.

It was said above that the religion which Moses had taught the Israelites was to be tested by the entry into Canaan. To this subject we must now return. When the people came into Canaan they found a well-developed religious usage already in possession. This usage followed, in the main, that of other settled Semites. Old Canaanite sanctuaries such as Gezer and Taanach have been excavated and they have yielded altars, standing stones and the usual accompaniments of worship: in addition traces of infant sacrifices have been discovered. The principal god who was worshipped was Hadad, the Addu of the Tell el-Amarna Tablets, a thunder deity.

The settlement of Israel in Canaan meant a struggle between their religion and that of the inhabitants. Political unity gradually came, as we saw above, in part by conquest, but also in part by amalgamation. The same was true of religious unity. Jehovah became the accepted God of the people, but many of the attributes of Hadad or Baal were given to Him, and the means by which He was to be approached were also modified. As is well known, Jehovah was actually called Baal even in the days of the monarchy. The religious ideas of two Semitic peoples, even though one was nomadic and the other settled, would be so much alike that amalgamation would be a simple matter. This was especially true of the methods of worship. Archaeology, in the words of Dr S. A. Cook, 'does not reveal that hiatus

which would have ensued had there been a dislocation of earlier conditions by invading Israelite tribes; earlier forms are simply developed, the evolution is a progressive one'.[1] That Israel should have adopted Canaanite ideas and customs is not surprising. Their god was a god of the desert, the gods of Palestine were gods of the soil, and in learning from the Canaanites the means by which the land was to be cultivated, they learnt also to propitiate the local Baalim who, from remote antiquity, had been regarded as the owners of the soil. Even in the days of Hosea men who worshipped Jehovah still believed that their crops came from Baal (Hos. ii, 8).

After the conquest came the period of the judges which later thought again misrepresented, picturing each judge as the ruler of a united nation. A careful study of the Old Testament, however, shews that the authority of each judge was only local, and that the Israelites were almost as disunited as their Canaanite predecessors had been. This disunion was in part due to the country, for Palestine, like Greece, tends naturally to the developement of small communities: in part it was due to the unconquered Canaanite fortresses which served to accentuate the lines of geographical separation. This internal separation was a source of weakness to the people when enemies from outside were threatening its very life. There was, however, one link which kept the tribes together: their common faith in Jehovah. The greatest collection of tribes was called out in

[1] *Religion of Ancient Palestine*, p. 115. (Constable).

His name and to fight His battles (Judg. v, 23). The period of the judges is often regarded as one of degeneration from the first enthusiasm which began the conquest of the land. This is probably true, but allowance must be made for the difficulties with which the people were faced during a time of settlement and transition, when new ideas and surroundings were working strongly upon them. But the unrest and lawlessness of the time shewed the need of more settled rule and of the establishment of a central authority.

In religion there was but slight developement. There is no trace in this period of an elaborately organized priesthood, though the number of sanctuaries must have been considerable, and they appear to have been scattered up and down the whole of the land. These sanctuaries seem to have been in the care of various families, but the Aaronic priesthood, afterwards to be supreme in Israel, had apparently not yet emerged. Professional priests or Levites are found wandering from place to place (Judg. xvii, 7, xix, 1) and their ministry was regarded as more potent than that of other folk (Judg. xvii, 13); but there is no monopoly of the priesthood.

Religion was still largely ritualistic and had not yet begun to exercise much influence upon morals, the standard of which was very low. This we gather not so much from deliberate statements as from the attitude of the writers to the deeds of Samson, Gideon, and Jael, deeds which revolt the conscience of Christians.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

(*The Date of the Exodus*)

Since the Old Testament writers have failed to give us the names of the Pharaohs of the Oppression and of the Exodus, we have to depend upon conjecture in attempting to date the event. Four different theories have been advanced. (*a*) The earliest date is that suggested by Josephus who regards the Exodus as being another account of the expulsion of the Hyksos (*c.* 1580). This theory has been accepted by some great scholars in the present day. One attractive feature about it is that it suggests the possibility of the protector of Moses being the famous Hatshepsut. (*b*) The age of the Tell el-Amarna Letters (*c.* 1450–1370) appeals to others. This theory places the Exodus in the reign of Amenophis II and it is supported by the identification of the Hebrews with the *Habiru* of the Letters. (*c*) The traditional date is the period of the XIXth dynasty (*c.* 1225) with Ramses II as the oppressor, and Merneptah as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. (*d*) Another suggested date is in the XXth dynasty. The truth of the matter is, in the opinion of the present writer, that there were a number of separate movements at different times by tribes who were afterwards absorbed in the Israelite confederation. Later thought combined them into a single movement.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

Essays II and VII in *The People and the Book*. (Oxford.)

H. R. Hall. *Ancient History of the Near East*. (Methuen.)

S. A. Cook. *Syria and Palestine in the Light of External Evidence* (C.A.H. II, 296 ff.) and *The Rise of Israel* (*ibid.* pp. 352 ff.).

C. F. Burney. *Israel's Settlement in Canaan*. (Oxford.)

R. A. S. Macalister. *The Philistines*. (University Press, Oxford.)

L. E. Binns. *From Moses to Elisha* (Clarendon Bible, vol. II).

E. W. G. Masterman. *The Holy Land* in Peake's Commentary, pp. 26 ff.

Commentaries on Exodus to Judges in the series mentioned above and, in addition, C. F. Burney, *Judges*. (Rivington.)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RISE OF THE PROPHETS

IN order to describe the rise of the prophets in Israel in any satisfactory manner it will be necessary to give a brief sketch of the history of the period; for the message and importance of the prophets can only be understood against the background of contemporary events.

Unfortunately no records from the prophets themselves for this period have come down to us, the age of the so-called written prophets has not yet dawned. There is, however, a good deal of material in the books of Samuel and Kings which is undoubtedly early and sufficiently reliable for us to gain a general idea of the actual developement, even if there remains much uncertainty as to details.

The last of the judges was Samuel. In his early years a threat had arisen which was to menace, for several generations, the very existence of the Israelites as an independent people. This threat came from the expansion of the Philistines.

This people had appeared in the land to which they were to give their name (Palestine = Philistia) in the reign of Ramses III of Egypt, when, in company with a number of other peoples, they attempted to invade the Delta. Their original home was Caphtor (Am. ix, 7; Deut. ii, 23) by

which the Old Testament writers probably meant Crete, though perhaps part of the adjacent mainland of Asia Minor should also be included in the term. This attempt and another which followed it were defeated by the Pharaoh after desperate fighting. The invaders, prevented from settling in the wealthy land of Egypt, were driven to find a home along the coastland, below the Judean foothills, where eventually they grouped themselves round five centres. Their settlement corresponded roughly in time with the Hebrew occupation of the hill-country to the east. In the natural process of expansion both peoples gradually approached one another and sooner or later conflict was inevitable.

The first record of any definite struggle is contained in the bare statement that Shamgar slew some Philistines with an ox-goad (Judg. iii, 31), but it is likely that the Danites, and possibly other Israelite tribes, were driven from the south by the Philistines to seek fresh homes in the north.[1]

From their settlements on the coast the Philistines slowly pushed their way eastward, no longer as mere spoilers but as permanent conquerors. A battle was fought at Eben-ezer in which the Israelites were completely overthrown and their national palladium, the ark, captured (1 Sam. iv). It is possible that the superiority of the Philistines was due to the possession of iron weapons,

[1] In the Song of Deborah the Danites are living by the sea (Judg. v, 17), later they moved north (Judg. xviii, 1).

BRITISH ISLES NAZARENE
1141 LIBRARY

which they are thought by some to have been the first to bring into Palestine (cf. 1 Sam. xiii, 19 ff.).

The overwhelming danger drove the people back on Jehovah, and, as in the days of Deborah, a wave of religious fanaticism swept over the nation. A Holy War was preached by the bands of prophets who seem at this juncture suddenly to have risen into prominence. The book of Samuel tells of a successful encounter with the enemy under the guidance of the prophet (1 Sam. vii): but the victory was either greatly exaggerated, or its consequences disappointing, for the whole situation remained desperately grave.

Before continuing the account of the Philistine war, it will be well to say something about the prophet and the conception of the office held in ancient Israel. The office must be distinguished from that of the priest; the duty of the latter, in addition to the care of the sanctuary, was to give judicial and oracular decisions, probably by means of the sacred lot. The prophet adopted different methods and played a different part. At this stage of Israel's religious developement, the current conception of the office was still very primitive, and the prophet himself was not regarded with particular respect. There seem to have been at least two distinct types, the Seer (*Ḥozeh* or *Ro'eh*) and the Prophet proper (*Nabhi*). The seer, as the name itself shews, had special insight which included a knowledge of the future. His methods were quiet and unemotional, and if Samuel can be regarded as typical of the order, he might

occupy a position of social importance. The prophet or *nabhi* was much more like a modern dervish. Wild ecstatic fits not infrequently came upon him, and his whole manner of conducting himself led to his often being regarded as a madman (cf. 2 Kings ix, 11). According to the statement in 1 Sam. ix, 9, the prophet gradually drove out the seer, but at the same time he took over some of his characteristics, such as second-sight (2 Kings vi, 17).

The movement seems to have been carried on by the prophets forming themselves into bands around some leader, who became their 'father'. These bands often gave way to wild fanatical outbursts which were liable to excite emotional onlookers into joining in their exercises (1 Sam. x, 10 ff., xix, 20 ff.). In later times one, like Amos, who felt that he had a message from Jehovah repudiated all connexion with them (Amos vii, 14). In spite, however, of their strange and unhealthy methods, these early prophets did represent a real stage in the developement of Israelite religion; for it was to Jehovah that they pointed men and it was in His service that their deeds were done.

We return now to our narrative. In their state of panic at the progress of the Philistine invasion the people felt the need of some permanent leader who, like the kings of the nations around them, should lead them forth to battle. Such a leader was speedily found for them, apparently by Samuel himself, in the person of Saul, a gigantic Benjaminite. He soon overcame the murmurs which, probably through tribal jealousy, had greeted his selection, and a

determined effort was made to free the people from their oppressors. The destruction of a garrison[1] by Jonathan, Saul's son (1 Sam. xiii, 3), gave the signal for the rising. The Philistines acted promptly and Saul soon found that he could place little reliance on his own followers (1 Sam. xiii, 6 f.). But Jonathan again distinguished himself and by a sudden onslaught brought confusion to the invaders (1 Sam. xiv, 1 ff.).

In a pause between the encounters with the Philistines, Saul, at the command of Samuel, conducted a punitive expedition against the Bedawin tribe of the Amalekites. He was completely successful, but unfortunately he quarrelled with Samuel over the disposal of the spoil and the two never again acted together (1 Sam. xv). In the book of Samuel two strands of narrative seem to have been combined, representing two very distinct points of view. These differences correspond with different attitudes towards the whole subject of the monarchy itself which are probably the result of later reflexion upon the workings of the institution. In one strand of narrative it is Jehovah who gives the king (1 Sam. ix, 16); in the other it is the people who demand him, and Jehovah, not without indignation, falls in with their wishes (1 Sam. viii, 4 ff. x, 17 ff.).

At length Saul, borne down by the burden of the unequal war and of the dissensions caused by Samuel's repudiation,

[1] The meaning of the word is uncertain; some render it *trophy*, others *officer*.

gave way to fits of terrible depression; but to the end he retained his heroic valour. The end was indeed not far off. Once more the Philistines, having marched north, swept down into the land, and a life of storm and stress ended in a tragic death on the slopes of Mount Gilboa.

Thus Saul fell, and his efforts to free Israel seemed to have ended in complete failure. But such was not really the case; he had shewn the people the value of unity, as well as the weakness which follows division. If he had failed, at least he had pointed a way along which his successor could travel with better fortune.

This successor was David, a young Judean of Bethlehem, who like Saul had been chosen by Samuel. The story of his early years is obscure. In some way or other he was brought to Saul's notice, either as a skilled player on the harp (1 Sam. xvi, 14 ff.), or through his valiant defeat of a Philistine giant (1 Sam. xvii, 55 ff.). Unfortunately he quickly aroused Saul's jealousy, and in spite of the pleadings of the monarch's own son, Jonathan, he was driven into exile and took service with the Philistines (1 Sam. xxvii, 1–3, xxix, 1–4). On Saul's death, David became king at Hebron, his own tribe of Judah forming the greater part of his subjects. No doubt he was still a Philistine vassal. After the tragic death of Esh-baal, Saul's son (2 Sam. iv), the rest of the people accepted David as their ruler. The work which Saul had taken in hand was once again proceeded with, and this time the unity of the nation made it more hopeful: the Philistines were decisively de-

feated, and other nations subdued, mainly by the activities of Joab, David's fierce captain. The crowning achievement was the capture of Jerusalem, which gave to the nation a new centre and capital, and one moreover which was not connected by tradition with any particular tribe.

The closing years of the reign were clouded by domestic troubles which, in the end, led to civil war. Absalom, the spoilt favourite of David, tried to dethrone his father but perished in the attempt. These internal struggles went to shew that Israel was not yet a unity and that the tribe of Judah was regarded with dislike by the rest of the kingdom (cf. 2 Sam. xx, 1 f.).

To David succeeded Solomon after a conspiracy in the harem (1 Kings i). His reign was one of internal peace, the result of a rule that was strong and pitiless. David had been little more than a tribal chief living on terms of intimacy with his people; Solomon was an oriental despot removed far from them. The design of David to build a temple to Jehovah was carried out by his son as part of a lavish scheme of building which beautified the new capital. The Temple was at first little more than a magnificent private chapel,[1] but gradually the whole religious life of the nation began to turn to Jerusalem as the special seat of Jehovah. The local sanctuaries still continued to exist but with diminishing glory.

[1] The Temple must not be thought of as a kind of cathedral, it was little more than 100 ft. in length, not so large as many village churches in England.

Externally also the reign of Solomon was one of peace. But this peace was really deceptive since it came about through the decline of Assyria which left the small states of Palestine free to develope their own resources. Israel had certain commodities which were acceptable to her neighbours: such were the wheat, wine, honey, and oil, and balm which in later days Ezekiel mentions (xxvii, 17). Most of her trade went through the hands of the Phœnicians of Tyre, since the sea-coast was still occupied by the Philistines. In co-operation with the same people Solomon established a fleet based on the port of Ezion-geber on the Red Sea. By this means trade was opened up with Ophir (perhaps the east coast of Africa or even India) from whence came gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks (1 Kings ix, 26 ff., x, 22).

But this time of peace was of benefit to the Syrians, who were later to become Israel's most dangerous enemies. They had not yet, however, become important, and to the men of Solomon's day, if they thought upon such matters, it might have seemed that the foundations of a new empire were being laid. But a narrow strip of territory like Palestine could never have supported such a structure: and in any case the expected expansion never took place, for on the death of Solomon the kingdom was split in two by the rebellion of the northern tribes. None the less men looked back from the gloom and humiliation of later times to the reigns of David and Solomon as the golden age of Israel's history.

The burden of Solomon's magnificence had fallen heavily upon the nation, which had to supply free labour for his building schemes (1 Kings v, 13 ff.), as well as to keep the court duly provided (1 Kings iv). The men of Judah felt no doubt that they had some share in all this glory, but the tribes of the north were jealous and embittered. When Rehoboam succeeded his father, an effort was made to gain some relaxation. But the young king contemptuously dismissed the deputation, and the house of David lost for ever the allegiance of the greater part of the people (1 Kings xii). The movement which led to the schism had been foretold by a prophet who presumably was in sympathy with it (1 Kings xi, 26 ff.). But the new king of Israel, Jeroboam, fearing the attraction which Jerusalem might have for his subjects, tried to counteract it by making lavish gifts to the two ancient sanctuaries of Dan and Bethel which were situated within his own territories (1 Kings xii, 28 ff.). He thus created an ecclesiastical as well as a political breach, but the GOD worshipped by both parts of the people was still Jehovah.

The two kingdoms continued to exist side by side for a time. The kings of the house of David, secure in the loyalty of their fellow tribesmen, held the throne till the end; the succession, save for the short intrusion of Athaliah, being uninterrupted. Judah was protected from foreign attacks by the more powerful northern kingdom and there is little of significance to record in its history. The names of two kings only stand out with any prominence, Asa and his son

Jehoshaphat; the reign of each of them was marked by a quickened interest in religion (1 Kings xv, 9 ff., xxii, 43 ff.).

On the throne of Israel, however, a series of short-lived dynasties held precarious power, and we hear little about them but their misdeeds. A few great names are noticeable. Jeroboam, the first monarch, was seemingly a person of power and parts; Omri was sufficiently noteworthy to give his name to the land[1]: and Jehu was a fanatical follower of Jehovah whose methods were condemned by the conscience of a later age (see Hos. i, 4). Ahab was another Solomon intent on glorifying himself and his capital by lavish building schemes. He was a devout follower of Jehovah according to his lights, but, again like his predecessor, he was led astray by matrimonial alliances. If the prophets had had a hand in creating the schism between Judah and Israel, it is probable that they soon repented of their act. The kings of Israel cared little for the ideals for which the prophetic movement stood, and the breach between them and the prophets soon widened (1 Kings xiv, 1 ff., xvi, 1–4). When Ahab, under the influence of Jezebel, allowed the worship of the Tyrian Baal to be propagated in Israel, the threat to the religion of Jehovah, as understood by the highest minds in the movement, was exceedingly serious. Perhaps the most ominous feature was that the greater part of the prophets, in their obsequious dependence on court favour, were apparently

[1] The Assyrians called Palestine the land of Humri.

willing to fall in with the king's wishes. At this juncture Elijah stepped forth as the champion of the traditional faith.

Elijah, in spite of some weaknesses, is one of the most impressive characters of the Old Testament, and even his failings make him more human. He came from the desert to defend the old pure faith which the nation had there adopted, and to turn their hearts from foreign cults and alien ideals. His character was simple and direct, and so were his methods, even to the point of ruthlessness. He saw one thing clearly, that Jehovah could not share the allegiance of the people with the god of another nation. It was no longer a question of the recognition of local Baalim, who, like patron saints or household gods, could occupy a position of subordination, but a real challenge to the supremacy of Jehovah. Like the earlier prophets he was a patriot and a fanatic, and in the end he was justified. Once Jezebel was dead no one cared very much about her or her god: but the memory of Elijah remained a treasured possession of the people, he was the prophet who was to reappear and restore all things (Mal. iv, 5 f.). His challenge to the nation on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii, 20 ff.) had gone home. But the amazing scene on Mount Carmel was not, so far as the future was concerned, the most significant event in the life of Elijah: that must be sought at Horeb whither the prophet in the depression of reaction had fled. At Horeb Jehovah had appeared to the men of old in thunder and flame, now He was to reveal Himself, and that to a prophet who has been described as

'pre-eminently the prophet of Yahweh manifested by fire',[1] as a still small voice (1 Kings xix, 8–12).

In their struggle against Ahab the prophets were helped by the growing resentment of the people against the rapacity of the royal house: this, I think, is a fair inference from the prominence which the writer of Kings gives to the story of Naboth and his vineyard (1 Kings xxi; 2 Kings ix, 26).

Elijah disappeared from among men as suddenly as he had come, but he left behind him a disciple who was at once recognized as his natural successor (2 Kings ii). Elisha presents us with an absolute contrast so far as method and training are concerned. He was a man of the court, not of the desert; he did not startle his fellows by sudden dramatic comings and goings, but lived continually among them; after the extinction of Baal worship he worked with the king and not against him, a task perhaps at least as difficult.[2] But his methods, if not so drastic as those of Elijah, were not less thorough. As a prophet he suffers from being overshadowed by his master, and stories told of the one seem, with but slight adaptation, to have been applied to the other.[3] By comparison he is a little vague and shadowy, but on the whole he stands nearer to the type of prophet who was to follow than did Elijah.

[1] Foakes Jackson, in *Peake's Commentary*, p. 303.

[2] 'Elijah is the Prophet in opposition: Elisha has the less heroic, if really more difficult, part of the Prophet whose side is in office.' Burkitt, in *The New Commentary*, p. 421.

[3] Cf. 1 Kings xvii, 8–24 and 2 Kings iv, 1–7, 18–37.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

T. H. Robinson. *Prophecy and the Prophets*, pp. 1–38. (Duckworth.)

W. Robertson Smith. *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 1–89. (Black.)

S. A. Cook. *Israel and the Neighbouring States* (C.A.H. III, 354 ff.).

L. E. Binns. *From Moses to Elisha* (Clarendon Bible, vol. II).

Commentaries on Samuel and Kings.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LATER PROPHETS

We come now to the prophets who are known to us, not merely by the reports of others, but by their own utterances. We must not, however, regard the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest as having actually been written by the prophet whose name they bear. The prophets were primarily preachers: that their teaching was preserved in writing was a secondary thing. Jeremiah, perhaps the greatest of all the prophets, had been delivering his message for many years before he began to write it down (Jer. xxxvi, 1 f.). The book ascribed to each prophet is to be regarded, to use modern terms, as a biography and not an autobiography. It consists of reports of his sermons together with reminiscences of his disciples: in the case of Jeremiah the whole seems to have been collected and edited by his faithful secretary, Baruch.

The existence of these biographies, although in most cases they are only slight, makes the picture of the later prophets more vivid than that of the former. It is true that the early period gives us the unique figure of Balaam, a Gentile, yet one whom Jehovah could use; and that in Judges, Samuel, and Kings, prophets appear from time to time; but we know little about them; even Nathan, who

dealt so faithfully with David, is but a shadowy figure. It is remarkable that most of the prophets before the fall of Samaria come from North Israel or are mainly concerned with its fortunes. Obvious examples are Elijah and Elisha, and it should not be forgotten that Amos, a native of Judah, delivered his message to Israel. So long as the northern kingdom lasted its importance was so much greater than that of Judah that the prophets felt that to declare the will of Jehovah to Israel was the really urgent task.

But the prophets were not always at one in the matter of the will of Jehovah, there was sometimes a sharp division between them: we remember the case of Micaiah and Zedekiah (2 Kings xxii) and that of Jeremiah and Hananiah (Jer. xxviii). On each occasion we find men, both claiming to be the spokesmen of Jehovah, on opposite sides. What test was to shew which was the true prophet and which the false? Jeremiah himself has given a number of characteristics of genuine prophecy: but to a modern mind they are hardly satisfactory as tests. In the first place the genuine utterance burns like fire or is like 'a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces' (xxiii, 29). But the energy and confidence of the false prophets must have seemed to be just as great to the onlooker as that of the true. The second test was that of fulfilment (xxviii, 9: cf. Deut. xvii, 21 f.). This test requires the lapse of time and by it some of the greatest of the prophets, if not all, would stand condemned, since few of them had all their forecasts fulfilled. The older school of critics tried to shift the emphasis from foretelling

to forthtelling, but there can be but little doubt that the prophets did definitely regard prediction as among the most important of their functions (cf. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion*, pp. 4 ff.). The third test is really an argument in a circle, since it merely states that those in agreement with Jeremiah were true prophets and had stood in the council of Jehovah, those who opposed him were false. It should be noticed that there is no appeal to the working of miracles, and that in the books of the prophets themselves records of miracles are almost unknown (contrast 2 Kings).[1]

The prophets were careful to have no dealings with anything that seemed like magic. By some of them dreams were regarded as a means by which the divine will was made known (cf. Joel ii, 28; also Job xxxiii, 14 ff. and Daniel), but to others dreams were but deceptive (Jer. xxiii, 25 f.; Ecclus. xxxiv, 1). In their enthusiastic passion to deliver the message which had come to them the prophets were at times unbalanced: they would see some great truth and forget the balance of truth as a whole. A number of scholars of the present day think that their visions came normally to them when they were in a state of ecstasy, and that they uttered short oracular sayings which were afterwards collected and arranged by their followers. The earlier prophets, as we saw above, were certainly subject

[1] The accounts of miracles in the Old Testament should not be taken too literally; the writers, as Gwatkin said, are 'more anxious to impress on us that an action was divine in origin than that it was miraculous in form'. *The Knowledge of God*, II, 20.

to sudden ecstatic fits, but it is doubtful whether men like Isaiah and Jeremiah received their messages when in such a condition. Cheyne used to teach that the vision which came to Isaiah in the Temple was intended to set before him the ideal of prophecy as a life-work, and thus to correct the primitive view which made it depend on these isolated moments of ecstasy.

The rise of the new type of prophet came about just as the northern kingdom was entering upon the final period of its existence. It began brilliantly: Syria, crippled by her struggles with Assyria, had ceased to be dangerous; Assyria herself, through troubles near at home, no longer interfered in Palestine. Thus a chance was given to Jeroboam II to revive the glories of the Davidic empire. A time of transient prosperity ensued; but it was prosperity divorced from righteousness; and Amos, and after him Hosea, denounced the avarice and cruelty of the 'profiteers' of the day (Am. ii, 6 ff., vi, 1–7; Hos. x, 12 f., xii, 7 f.). Jeroboam died in 741 and the nation only survived for another twenty years. During that time a number of kings occupied the perilous throne: but of stability of rule or continuity of policy there was none, save that a foolish reliance upon Egypt led Israel to ally herself with other Palestinian states in vain attempts to check the reviving power of Assyria. Samaria finally fell to Sargon in 722 B.C. Judah, with a real statesman like Isaiah to guide her, was able to avoid the fate of Israel.

But the fall of Samaria was a severe blow to her weaker

sister. So long as the northern kingdom retained its power, it formed a protection against the attacks of other nations; now Judah lay open to their full force. The land to the north was not of course entirely desolate. Sargon had exiled some 27,000 of the Israelites, but that was but a small proportion of the population, and in their place he had brought in other peoples with whom the inhabitants no doubt were quickly amalgamated (2 Kings xvii, 24).

The northern kingdom thus went down in a welter of violence and bloodshed: Judah alone remained as the people of Jehovah. But the lesson of Israel's fate was lost upon its people, and they insisted on plunging into politics just as if Assyria had never captured Samaria. As a result Sennacherib destroyed all the Judean fortresses except Jerusalem itself. The sufferings of the countryside have been described with vivid force by Isaiah's rustic contemporary, Micah. His opinion of Jerusalem (Mic. iii, 12) was by no means that of the statesman-prophet who had successfully foretold its preservation. Hezekiah was then king, a loyal servant of Jehovah, and a friend to the prophetic party. Under his son, Manasseh, the prophetic or puritan party had to endure much opposition and hardship, but the long reign came to an end at last and, after the brief interlude of Amon, Josiah, then only a child of eight, came to the throne.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, whilst repairs were being carried on in the Temple, an anonymous law-book

was discovered (2 Kings xxii, 3 ff.),[1] and in obedience to its precepts Josiah began at once a vigorous attempt to cleanse the kingdom from every taint of idolatry. In order to further this aim he endeavoured to centralize all worship at Jerusalem and to disestablish the local sanctuaries: an exceedingly drastic step to which a modern parallel would be the closing of all parish churches and the restriction of worship to the cathedral in each diocese.

In carrying out these reforms Josiah seems not to have sought the advice or the co-operation of Jeremiah, and it is significant that in his commendation of Josiah, the prophet makes no mention of his zeal as a reformer (Jer. xxii, 15 f.). But the end of the reforms and of Josiah himself came all too quickly. In 612 Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, fell before the Medes and Babylonians. Necho of Egypt, who was the ally of Assyria, marched to her help and on the way he was opposed with romantic hardihood by Josiah.[2] The feeble barrier was easily swept

[1] This book is regarded by most critics as containing the kernel of the present book of Deuteronomy (i.e. xii–xxvi). It is probable that the 'discovery' was pre-arranged, and that Hilkiah was in sympathy with the prophetic party whose views it advocated. In 2 Chron. xxxiv, 3, 8 ff., the reformation is placed *before* the discovery of the book, and is said to have been begun in the *twelfth* year of Josiah's reign.

[2] In 2 Kings xxiii, 29, the Pharaoh is said to have gone up against the king of Assyria, but this is evidently a mistake. The discovery by C. J. Gadd of a new Babylonian tablet has thrown fresh light on the events of this era. It shews that Nineveh actually fell in 612 B.C., not in 606 the accepted date, but that an attempt was made to prolong the Assyrian kingdom in North

away and Josiah perished: thus once again fanaticism had led to speedy doom. A strong light is thrown upon the candour of the Old Testament writers by the fact that they have allowed the promise to Josiah of a peaceful death (2 Kings xxii, 20) to remain although it was so grievously disappointed.

The important question of the mastery of Syria was now to be settled. The battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. saw the overwhelming defeat of Necho by Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon: destiny had spoken, and for centuries to come the Jews and their neighbours were to be under Mesopotamian rule.

For a time Judah struggled to obtain her freedom with the aid of Egypt which, if defeated, was not above stirring up her smaller neighbours to resist the flood of Babylonian advance. The end, however, was inevitable. In 597 Jerusalem fell into the hands of her besiegers and the best of her citizens, including the prophet Ezekiel, were taken into captivity. Jeremiah had striven in vain to save the nation from its folly: and even after the first capture his task was not over. Again Judah refused to learn her lesson: a second revolt broke out, a second siege followed, and further leading away into captivity (2 Kings xxiv–xxv). Jeremiah himself was allowed to remain behind in Palestine but fresh troubles led to his being carried into Egypt

Syria. See C. J. Gadd, *The Fall of Nineveh*. It is worth noting that Josephus (*Antiquities*, x, v, 1) had already corrected the statement of the Old Testament.

by a band of fugitives (Jer. xl–xliii) and there, so legend has it, he died at the hands of his countrymen.

That, very briefly, is the background against which the later prophets lived out their fateful lives. They brought to the hearts and minds of the best of their people that ever-growing revelation of Jehovah which is the priceless contribution of the Hebrew race to the welfare of mankind. An old legend tells us that the Apostles' Creed was composed by each of the apostles providing a clause: perhaps it might be said, and certainly with greater truth, that each of the prophets added some fresh thought to the faith of Israel.

Amos taught men that because Jehovah is righteous He will judge not only the nations, but His own people as well. Hosea told of the love of Jehovah, a love like that of a man for his wife, and the need for faithfulness in Israel. Isaiah realized that Jehovah desired righteousness more than ritual and gave to the idea of the divine holiness a new moral content. He taught the beginnings of a philosophy of history and saw that though the nation might perish a remnant would survive. Micah also emphasized the divine demand for justice rather than formal worship and, like Isaiah, pleaded for social righteousness. Zephaniah added but little to the course of revelation, but he elaborated the idea of the Day of Jehovah and extended judgement to all, even to the brute creation (i, 2 f.). Nahum, in his exultation over the fall of Nineveh and the sufferings of its people, strikes that narrowly patriotic note which seems to

place him with the prophets whom Jeremiah denounced. Habakkuk is important as bringing up the problem of evil (i, 12 f.) and the apparent use by Jehovah of unrighteous instruments. Jeremiah takes up Isaiah's teaching of the inviolability of Zion and shews that it cannot be pleaded by a wicked nation. He emphasizes the personal side of religion, significant teaching for a people who were shortly to be taken away from their land and temple. Ezekiel developes the personal aspect of religion, not on the devotional side, but as carrying with it responsibility for one's own deeds. He was a link between the prophetic type of religion and that priestly type which was to develope after the exile. The anonymous prophets whose writings have been added to Isaiah call upon Israel to be a light to lighten the Gentiles.

The teaching of the prophets thus formed a continual developement of the idea of God, and of man's response to the divine revelation. But the prophets themselves, although they might be conscious that they were in some degree pioneers, based their appeal on the past. Many of them regarded the wilderness period as the golden age of the race (Am. ii, 10, v, 25; Hos. ii, 16 f.). That men of the desert like Elijah or Amos should think thus is not surprising, but the idea also occurs in the teaching of a villager like Jeremiah (ii, 2 f.). On the other hand, to Ezekiel, as to some of the writers of the Pentateuch, the wilderness was the scene of murmuring and constant unfaithfulness (Ezek. ii, 3, xx, 8 ff.).

The majority of the prophets thus felt that they stood for Jehovah and the religion of the wilderness against unworthy innovations. This was especially true of their attitude towards sacrifices. They held that in the wilderness there had been no sacrifice[1] (Am. v, 25; Jer. vii, 22) and that Jehovah even in their day was demanding not offerings but justice and mercy and humility (Mic. vi, 6–8; Hos. vi, 6; Is. i, 11 ff.; Jer. vii, 22 f.). It is of course quite possible to argue that in their anxiety to emphasize moral values the prophets unduly minimized the place of sacrifice, both in their own and in previous ages, or that like the writer who added the last verse to Ps. li they felt that sacrifices from blameless hearts would be acceptable. On the other hand, as Skinner points out, 'They never demand a purified ritual, but always and exclusively the fulfilment of the ethical commands of Yahweh'.[2]

What, it may be asked, was their positive teaching? If it had to be put into a single sentence I should say that it was the belief in Jehovah as a living GOD. This is, and always has been, man's deepest need; and the danger is that creeds and dogmas may be made a substitute for such knowledge.[3]

[1] Burkitt suggests that this may have been because they were not yet in Jehovah's land (cf. Josh. v, 2–5). In any case the prophets could have had no knowledge of the ideal though entirely imaginary picture of worship in the wilderness which is presented by P.

[2] *Prophecy and Religion*, p. 181.

[3] Cf. F. D. Maurice: 'We have been dosing our people with religion, when what they want is not this but the living God'. Maurice was the friend and inspirer of Charles Kingsley.

It was through their unflinching faith in Jehovah as a GOD who did things that the prophets were able to rise above the limited ideas of their contemporaries. In the earlier stages it is true that Jehovah was held to be but the GOD of their own race, and it is by no means clear when this stage was left behind. But by the time of the written prophets the conception of Him as the GOD of the universe was held by the highest minds.

From this doctrine it followed that Jehovah was the creator and sustainer of all things (Jer. xxvii, 5). He it was who had made man and He still cared for him, bringing the Syrians from Kir as well as Israel from Egypt (Am. ix, 7). Jehovah is also high and lifted up (Is. vi, 1), holy in a fuller sense than that of mere separation. He is just and righteous and demands similar qualities in His worshippers.

Thus they thought of GOD. Man in his turn must respond to the divine revelation by the performance of certain duties. These duties concern both GOD Himself and man's own fellows. Before, however, going on to consider man's duties, we have to realize that the prophets held that he was free to choose whether he would obey or not (Jer. ii, 19). It was true that until the teaching of Jeremiah (xxxi, 29 f.) and Ezekiel (xviii) man thought that he might be punished for the sins of his fathers, but even this did not free him from responsibility and the denunciations of the prophets.

Man's duty towards GOD included perfect obedience to His commands: this ranked above sacrifice as we have already seen. None the less, worship was expected from

man, and worship offered to other gods would surely be punished.

Man's duty to his neighbour is closely bound up with his duty towards GOD. The later prophets would have agreed with St John (1 Jo. iv, 20) that a man who fails to love his neighbour whom he has seen is a liar if he says he loves GOD whom he has not seen. In fact a man's relations with his neighbour provide, in their eyes, the best opportunity of serving Jehovah: hence the emphasis upon social righteousness and the denunciation of oppression and injustice. These denunciations were often delivered when all seemed to be going well, when in the eyes of the people the prosperity of the country signified Jehovah's approval of their conduct. Thus the prophets condemned the greed and avarice of the great landlords as well as the senseless luxury of their womenfolk (Is. iii). They did so because they knew that they spoke in Jehovah's name. So also they interfered in international politics and for the same reason.

The crown of the whole prophetic teaching is the doctrine of the New Covenant. This doctrine is set forth in a few verses of Jeremiah (xxxii, 32 ff.) which, in spite of their brevity, contain matter of infinite value. As we have already seen, religion for the Semite was a relation not so much between the individual and his god as between the tribe and the god. Each man was a member of a particular tribe and worshipped its god. Even when the idea of the uniqueness of Jehovah had been grasped, men did not rise at once to the idea of a relation between Him and His

worshippers which was independent of nationality. To Jeremiah it was given to rise to the height of this wonderful conception, a conception which has now become a commonplace of our thinking, if not of our practice. To his contemporaries it seemed more like a paradox, and indeed for centuries men paid but little heed to the idea. The religion of the Jews after the Exile developed on very different lines. Indeed it was not until our Lord appeared that the full significance of this conception was recognized.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

Essay VIII in *The People and the Book*. (Oxford.)

T. H. Robinson. *Prophecy and the Prophets*, pp. 39 ff. (Duckworth.)

W. Robertson Smith. *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 90 ff. (Black.)

J. Skinner. *Prophecy and Religion*. (Cambridge.)

S. A. Cook. *The Prophets of Israel*. (C.A.H. III, 458 ff.).

T. H. Robinson. *The Decline and Fall of the Hebrew Kingdoms* (Clarendon Bible, vol. III).

Commentaries on the various books in the series mentioned above and, in addition, G. A. Smith on *Isaiah* and on *The Twelve Prophets* in the Expositor's Bible. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

CHAPTER SIX

THE RISE OF JUDAISM

JERUSALEM had fallen before the power of Babylon in 586 B.C. A period of anarchy followed in which the land became partially desolate. Later writers tended to exaggerate the actual desolation, applying to the whole countryside words which had originally been spoken only of the cities, and in particular of Jerusalem and the Temple (Zech. i, 12, vii, 5 : cf. 2 Chron. xxxvi, 21). Then in 538 Babylon in turn fell, practically without resistance, to part of the army of Cyrus. This event meant the end of Semitic rule in the Near East and the beginnings of the Persian Empire, one of the greatest achievements of the ancient world.[1]

Cyrus was a statesman and realized that a wise ruler will respect and formally recognize the religious traditions of

[1] 'The Persian empire was created within the space of a single generation by a series of conquests that followed one another with a rapidity scarcely equalled except by Alexander, and by the Arabs in the first generation after the death of Mohammed.... Confirmed and rounded off by Darius, this empire was maintained, by the same family that created it, for two centuries undivided and unbroken, whereas Alexander's dominions were separated from his family and divided immediately after his death, and within the first century and a half of Islam great dynastic changes occurred and the unity of Arabian rule was broken.' *Camb. Anc. Hist.* IV, 2.

conquered peoples. Accordingly, on the one hand, he made use of the Oracles of the Greeks, and, on the other, announced himself as a worshipper of Bel, Marduk, and Nebo, to whose help he ascribed his victory over Babylon. Toleration was to be the policy of his government, and the various gods and peoples who had been removed from their lands by the Babylonians were allowed to return. Amongst others who took advantage of this permission were the Jews, though not in any great numbers.

The Jews in exile were not treated as captives, and following the advice of Jeremiah (xxvii, 4–8) they had settled down and made permanent homes. Zion was still a religious centre to which they lifted up their hearts: but the land of Judah was no paradise, even for a farmer, whilst for a trader it was simply impossible. To go back meant breaking up their homes, losing their trade, a long and dangerous journey, and at the end—the barren hillsides of Judea. After years of exile, Zion was only a tradition, and though there might be some who preferred Jerusalem 'above every joy' (Ps. cxxxvii, 6) the number of them was inconsiderable. The anonymous prophet of the Exile had already realized that the great enemy in the way of the realization of his dreams of restoration was not alien compulsion, but Jewish indifference and trust in idols (Is. xlvi, 8 ff., xlviii, 1 ff.).

When the Babylonian armies finally retired from Palestine, the people who had fled away and hidden themselves would slowly return. So sacred a spot as Jerusalem would

not long remain unoccupied, and though the Temple lay in ruins it was still a notable sanctuary (Jer. xli, 4 ff.). The first authentic knowledge that we have of conditions is contained in Haggai and Zechariah. These books give us the picture of a community living quietly and even comfortably (Hag. i, 4) in its own land. The people are apparently not returned exiles, though they look forward to the coming back of their dispersed brethren (Zech. ii, 10 ff., viii, 7). By both the prophets they are addressed as 'the people of the land' (Hag. ii, 4; Zech. vii, 5) or the 'remnant' (Hag. i, 12, 14, ii, 2; Zech. viii, 6, 11 f.). Some scholars therefore conclude, in the words of one of them, that 'The term "Revival" describes the real facts better than either "Restoration" or "Return"'.[1]

In any case the progress of events in Judah is difficult to follow. The call to re-build the Temple was sounded in Oct. 520. A little later Zechariah comes upon the scene and the foundations are actually laid. It is possible that at this juncture an attempt was made to restore an independent kingdom, with Zerubbabel as its king. Messianic language was used of him (e.g. he is called the Branch in Zech. iii, 8, vi, 12 f.: cf. Jer. xxiii, 5, xxxiii, 15), and in his person, when the kingdoms have been subdued by the power of Jehovah, the curse on the dethroned Coniah (Jer. xxii, 24) was to be reversed (Hag. ii, 23). The whole episode is very mysterious as Zerubbabel suddenly disappears from the scene, and we hear no more about him. Possibly he was

[1] C. F. Kent, *Hist. of the Jewish People*, p. 134. (Scribners.)

removed by Tattenai, the Persian satrap of Transpotamia (in which Palestine was included), who visited Jerusalem about this time (Ezra v, 8). The Temple was completed about 516 B.C., and then there is silence until the coming of Nehemiah in 445.[1]

To Nehemiah and the strict Babylonian Jews the people of the land were living a life quite unworthy of the followers of Jehovah. They had contracted alliances with foreign wives and they allowed foreigners to 'defile' the land by their presence. The people of the north, the Samaritans, especially aroused Nehemiah's wrath. The Samaritans, although no doubt they included among them people of mixed descent, were really a sect of orthodox Jews who differed from their fellows over the site of the sanctuary; they upheld the rights of the ancient Shechem, where the patriarchs had worshipped, against the newer Jerusalem. Under the Persians Samaria was the seat of the Government, and possibly a feeling of rivalry was aroused by this. The final breach came about, so far as we can see, largely as the result of a personal quarrel: but this was the occasion rather than the cause of the schism.

It is interesting to recall that the fifth century B.C., which

[1] If Ezra is a historic person, which I am inclined to doubt, his visit must be placed in 397. It should be noted that Nehemiah ignores him and acts as if he were sole leader. In Ecclus. xlix, 11 ff. and 2 Macc. i, 18 ff., ii, 13, the restoration of the Temple and its services is attributed to Nehemiah alone. It is possible that Ezra was brought in by the Priestly school in order to make the restoration the work of a priest and not of a layman.

saw the visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem, was the great age of Athens; that Nehemiah and Pericles were contemporaries; and that whilst the Jews were re-building Jerusalem, the Greeks were adorning Athens. The struggle of the Greeks with Persia must have been known even in the narrow Judaic circles of Palestine, but no trace is found of it in existing Hebrew literature.

The period immediately after the Exile was one of crisis and from it emerged what we know as Judaism. There were two main problems to be solved: (*a*) Was Judah to be a nation or a church? (*b*) Was Judah to take up the task of the Servant of Jehovah (Is. xlii, 1–7, xlix, 1–12, l, 4–9, lii, 13–liii) and be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' or was it to be narrow and exclusive?

The first of these problems was decided by the fact that very few of the exiled Jews thought it worth their while to return to the home of their fathers: Babylon and a wider world offered them a more comfortable home and an infinitely greater scope for their genius for trade, perhaps then first manifesting itself on a large scale. It is true that in the pre-exilic days there had been trading in Palestine and perhaps the instinct went back to their Canaanite ancestors.[1] The glories of the age of David and Solomon were forgotten or spiritualized and, instead of endeavouring to revive an extensive empire, the Jews gave their energies to establishing an exclusive church. As we saw

[1] Canaanite is an equivalent for merchant: see Zeph. i, 11; Prov. xxxi, 24 (Hebrew).

above, it is possible that some of them in the age of Haggai and Zechariah cherished political ambitions, but, if so, their disappointment made others realize the futility of such hopes.

The second problem was more difficult, but gradually the decision was made in favour of separation from other peoples. Circumstances seemed to force the Jewish leaders along a path which could only end there; the danger of absorption by the heathen was a very real one, and how were they, in their weakness, to avoid it except by shutting themselves off from all avoidable contact with those around them? To take the line which they did may seem to have been a confession of want of power; it was also a confession of want of faith, a real loss of spiritual initiative. L. E. Browne in his interesting volume, *Early Judaism*, suggests that the rejection of our Lord was virtually made in this period, because the principles, both religious and political, which made that tragedy inevitable, then gained the upper hand.[1] On the opposite side of the account must be placed the splendid stand which the Jews made for their God in the age of the Maccabees, a stand which would not have been possible but for their separation from heathenism (see Chapter VII). Not all the Jews, however, adopted the position of the majority, and in the beautiful allegory of Jonah,

[1] Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity* (Williams and Norgate), and I. and R. Levy, *Deuteronomy to Isaiah*, pp. 38–77 (Oxford) do not consider that the Jews neglected their missionary vocation.

in which a Hebrew prophet is made to care for Gentiles, we have an anticipation of the spirit of Christianity itself:—the sign of Jonah (Lk. xi, 29 f.) which our Lord took up.

Let us now consider the lesser characteristics of this period of the developement of Israel's faith. The most obvious characteristic is the greatly increased importance of institutions. This may have been due in part to contact with the elaborate Babylonian religious organization with its great temples and powerful priesthood. In any event the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem was fraught with much consequence, since it gave to Judaism a centre and also made possible the revival of the sacrificial system. The older prophets had thought but little of institutions and organizations: a different attitude marks their successors after the Exile. Haggai, for example, by comparison with Micah, seems taken up with material things. We must, however, remember that he was dealing with a different set of problems. Malachi, too, is very material and makes the payment of tithes to the priesthood the great test of religion (iii, 10). From the point of view of the priests the security of their endowments was of the greatest importance, and no doubt Malachi reflects their point of view. But it would have been interesting to have heard Jeremiah on the whole question.

Amongst the exiles, on this and other questions, a much more liberal feeling prevailed. They had found that Jehovah was no mere local GOD, that He could be worshipped 'by the waters of Babylon' just as readily as on the

hills of Zion. But they clung also to certain observances which distinguished them from their neighbours. Fresh importance came to be attached to the sign of circumcision (an importance which is well maintained in New Testament times); the Sabbath, too, must be observed, as a sign of loyalty to Jehovah, especially by those who cannot join in the great feasts. It was during the Exile no doubt that the first experiments were made which led up to the regularly organized system of the synagogue.[1] The worship of the synagogue in turn probably made popular the idea of a set liturgy and regular readings: all this was a preparation for the ecclesiastical developements of the Christian Church.

Among the exiles, too, the developement of personal religion must have been hastened. Private prayer begins to be regarded with fresh importance, and there is the desire for the pouring out, even upon the slave and the handmaid, of the spirit of Jehovah. The individual approach to GOD, although apt to be forgotten in the elaborately organized Temple services, is being cultivated by the pious.

Both among the exiles and in Palestine the age was one of reflexion rather than of action. Political ambitions had been put aside for the time and under the shelter of a strong though alien government they could live in security. They turned therefore to a study of their own past which they

[1] During the Exile sacrifice was impossible since it could be offered only in Jerusalem. In its place gatherings for prayer and for the reading of sacred books would naturally take place. In course of time these gatherings would be organized in every Jewish community, even in Palestine itself.

now saw through a golden haze. They read back into that past ideas and institutions which had actually been devised by their own near predecessors, and in collecting and editing the traditions, knowingly or otherwise, made them serve their own conceptions of what was fitting.

The loss of political power meant that kings were to be displaced by priests; that Judah was to become a community, such as was common in the Persian Empire, grouped round a temple and ruled by a priestly caste. The Jewish priesthood was, in its final form, an exceedingly elaborate organization, with various grades of priests, culminating in the high priest himself, a person not only of great dignity but of considerable power.

The growth of priestly power was accompanied by a decay of prophecy. In the story of the reading of the law by Ezra no prophet is brought in to declare the will of Jehovah; the scribe, with the inspired book in his hand, is enough for all ordinary requirements and the inspired man gradually vanishes from Israel. The Priestly school tended more and more to make Judaism the religion of a book, and so to pave the way for Islam which is such a religion *par excellence*.

In considering the beliefs and point of view of Judaism we must be careful, however, not to generalize too freely. In ancient religions there was not that emphasis on identity of belief which has been the mark of the Christian Church since the fourth century. The same community which could include both Nehemiah and the author of the book

of Jonah could have had no narrow definition of orthodoxy. Judaism had in it many strands, and the real test was outward conformity to certain rites rather than the profession of inward beliefs. In later times the Sadducees did not question the right of the Pharisees, who held new fangled doctrines such as the Resurrection, to be orthodox Jews.

As in earlier periods, the beliefs of the people, so far as they have been preserved for us in the writings of their leaders, depended on their idea of Jehovah. One great effect the Exile had upon them was to make them see that He was no longer to be worshipped under the form of an idol, and that the gods of the heathen whose idols were all around them were nothingness and vanity (Is. xl, 18 ff.). That lesson was burnt into the nation, never to be forgotten. Jehovah was supreme and alone. This doctrine tended in time to make Him also remote and, as always follows when the transcendence of GOD is over-emphasized, the necessity of intermediaries became apparent. This necessity was met by the belief in angels. Furthermore, the growing belief in the separation of Jehovah from the world, and all that was sinful, led to the conviction that His people must also be separate, at any rate from their heathen neighbours, and gradually, as the real meaning of holiness came to be grasped, from sin and defilement of every kind. Each of these subjects demands a fuller treatment.

The increased emphasis upon GOD's power and glory led to a new idea of His methods of dealing with His

creatures. This was to be no longer direct (cf. the naïve 'coming down' of Gen. xi, 5) but by means of angels. Angels were simply the attendants on the divine sovereign, the messengers who made known His will or executed it. This idea was greatly developed in the two centuries immediately before the coming of our Lord, as can be seen in the book of Daniel. In the books outside the Old Testament, Tobit, Enoch, and Jubilees, angels are even more prominent, and indeed so numerous did they become that not only were names given to them, but they were arranged in ranks and orders.

One of the original purposes of sending angels upon earth was, it was supposed, that they might instruct and help mankind (Jubilees iv, 15); but unfortunately, as we are told in Gen. vi, 2, they fell before the beauty of the daughters of men, and in consequence were banished and imprisoned (Jub. v, 6, 10). Not all, however, thus suffered: some still were allowed to remain on earth to tempt men; the good angels did their best to counteract their efforts by revealing to Noah certain vegetable charms which were powerful against demons (Jub. x, 1–12).

In the Old Testament itself there is no idea of an actual spirit of evil (even the serpent of Gen. iii is not identified with the devil), it is GOD Himself who brings evil to pass (Am. iii, 6). Satan is one of the 'sons of God',[1] a member of the divine court (Job i, 6), whose business is to act as a kind of public accuser (cf. Zech. iii, 1). In this connexion

[1] That is 'angels', as in Gen. vi, 2; Job. xxxviii, 7.

the significant change made by the writer of 1 Chron. xxi, 1 should be noted. He states that it was Satan, not Jehovah Himself as in 2 Sam. xxiv, 1, who moved David to number Israel. The older writer had not yet realized that, however angry Jehovah might be, it was undignified for Him to entrap David into committing a compromising action in order to be able to punish Israel—this must be done by one of His officials. But the fact that Satan (or *the* Satan as it should be) was always against the Jews led them to regard him in the end as the actual spirit of evil. In Jubilees the chief of the angels is called Mastema, and given the title of Prince (cf. John xii, 31, etc.). He, like Satan, is saddled with the evil which is done in the world, and such things as the attack on Moses recorded in Ex. iv, 24 are said to be done by him and not by Jehovah.

The desire to magnify Jehovah led also to the introduction of angels as the means of revelation. The older prophets claimed to receive their messages from Jehovah Himself, the later prophets had to depend on messengers (Ezek. xliii, 6; Zech. i, 9; Dan. xi, 21; cf. Rev. i, 1). So far was the process carried that the Jews came to believe that even the covenant at Sinai was not made with Moses direct but through angels (Gal. iii, 19; Hebs. ii, 2).

The hardening process by which Judaism became a closed religion for one nation only, and that a nation which avoided every possible contact with the rest of mankind, began, as we have seen, in the days of Nehemiah. It was the logical conclusion to the belief that Israel, as the

peculiar possession of Jehovah, must be separate. Protests against such a doctrine seem to be found in the books of Jonah and of Ruth, but for the time it became predominant in Judah. Humanly speaking, it was this process which enabled Judaism to resist the attacks of those who would have brought it under Greek influences (see next chapter). There is always the danger that the indiscriminate admission of numbers of outsiders into a religion will result in its being unduly influenced by their ideas: this is probably what took place when Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire in the days of Constantine.

The later part of the post-exilic period saw the developement of interest in all kinds of problems which we name philosophical, both metaphysical and ethical. Such questions as the meaning of suffering and the forgiveness of sin came in for constant discussion. A consideration of them, as of the whole doctrine of the Future as it concerns the nation and the individual, must be left for later chapters.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

Essay IX in *The People and the Book.*

L. E. Browne. *Early Judaism.* (Cambridge University Press.)

C. C. Torrey. *Ezra Studies.* (University of Chicago Press.)

R. H. Kennett. *The Servant of the Lord.* (Arnold.)

R. H. Kennett. *From Nebuchadnezzar to Alexander* in Camb. Biblical Essays. (Cambridge University Press.)

S. A. Cook. *The Inauguration of Judaism* (C.A.H. vi, 167 ff.).

W. F. Lofthouse. *Israel after the Exile* (Clarendon Bible, vol. iv).

Commentaries on Ezra, Nehemiah, etc., as above.

CHAPTER SEVEN

JUDAISM AND HELLENISM

UNTIL quite recently the two centuries immediately before the coming of our Lord were regarded as a kind of desert, and we spoke, habitually, of the 'gap' between Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament in our English Bible, and Matthew, the first of the New. In the past few years, however, much work has been done on the abundant literature of this period, some of which was already known to us in the Apocrypha. The result has been that our opinion of them has entirely changed, and so great an authority as Dr Charles even claims that these two centuries, hitherto regarded as of such small value, 'might be described as the most fruitful centuries in religious life and thought in the history of Israel'.[1] In this chapter we shall deal with the outward events of these centuries, and in the two which follow we shall discuss the various ideas which, taken over largely from a still earlier period, were being developed in them.

It was pointed out above that when the Greeks were in the age of their greatest glory the Jewish writers apparently knew nothing about them. They were merely a distant

[1] *Between the Old and New Testaments*, p. 115. (H.U.L.)

nation (Is. lxvi, 19) and one which was notorious for dealing in slaves (Joel iii, 6). It is strange that the Athenian expedition to Egypt (460–454 B.C.), an event the importance of which has been a little overshadowed by the Peloponnesian War, is never referred to, as it must have been the talk of the near East. Palestine and Egypt must then, as at all ages, have been closely in touch with one another. On the other hand, the Jews were too insignificant a people to call for special mention by Greek writers, though they are probably included among the Syrians mentioned by Herodotus as having learned the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians (ii, 104).

The two nations first came into close contact through the conquests of Alexander the Great. Alexander was no mere 'war lord', and his campaigns were intended, in part at any rate, to help forward the realization of a great and noble ideal, the abolition of racial boundaries and the transforming of mankind into a single world state, in which the culture of Greece should be the moulding influence.[1] Alexander was far in advance of his times, and his ideal scheme would probably have come to very little, even if he had lived long enough to complete the conquest of the Persian Empire, and then to organize it on new lines. But the ideal was not entirely forgotten, and the Seleucid kings (so called because descended from one of his generals, Seleucus) always regarded themselves as carrying on his work. It is interesting to notice the contrast between

[1] Cf. *Camb. Anc. Hist.* VI, 427 ff.

the real endeavour made by Alexander and the Hellenizers to adapt their culture to the needs of other peoples, and the exclusive spirit of the Jews who regarded their own religion as a peculiar treasure in which no foreigner must share. Alexander was preparing the way for a new world-religion.

Naturally enough, it was the Jews of the Dispersion who were the first to be affected by the spread of the new culture, especially the large numbers who had migrated to the city which Alexander had founded and named after himself. There in course of time they adopted the Greek language, and with it many Greek ideas. But even in Palestine itself the influence of Hellenism could be perceived: some of the towns adopted new Greek names, Ashdod became Azotus, and Acco, Ptolemais: whilst individuals began to despise their ancient Semitic names, and to turn them into the nearest Greek equivalent, thus Joshua became Jason.[1] The two cultures, Greek and Hebrew, were really antagonistic from the first. Hellenism was brilliant intellectually and artistically; it valued supremely beauty of form and of speech. But, in spite of a few great names, it was weak ethically. Moral decay was alarmingly frequent among alien peoples who adopted Greek culture, and the contempt with which the rude

[1] A parallel can be found at the time of the Renaissance when names were given a Greek, or more commonly a Latin, form: a well-known instance of the former change is Melanchthon whose real name was Schwartzerd.

though upright Romans regarded the conquered Greeks was in part justified.

On the death of Alexander, Palestine came under the power of Ptolemy who had seized Egypt as his share of the dismembered empire. Jerusalem itself was captured in 320 B.C., and, since the attack was made on the Sabbath, the pious defenders offered no resistance. The Egyptian overlordship lasted for more than a century, though it was constantly threatened by the Seleucid kings who held Syria as part of their wide dominions. Under Egyptian rule the Jews were on the whole well treated: Jerusalem continued to be, as under the Persians, the centre of a small community gathered round a temple and ruled by its high priest. In course of time the combination of secular rule and religious office proved, as so often, harmful to the latter, the high priests became worldly and ambitious, and subordinated the spiritual side of their office to the secular.

Egyptian rule came to an end in 198 B.C. when Antiochus the Great defeated Ptolemy V at Paneas near the sources of the Jordan. Thenceforward Palestine went with Syria as part of the Seleucid empire. Antiochus himself was killed twelve years later in an attempt to seize the treasures of the temple at Elymais, and his son, Seleucus IV, succeeded him. Seleucus had reigned for only ten years when he was poisoned by Heliodorus who usurped the throne. His tenure was, however, but a short one as the brother of the murdered king, Antiochus Epiphanes, immediately

avenged his death, and thus began his own fateful reign (176–164).

Antiochus Epiphanes is one of the most baffling characters in history, and to form any just or even clear impression of him is almost impossible. No doubt the various accounts which have been preserved are marked by prejudice. The author of Daniel, for example, calls him 'a contemptible person', which he certainly was not. Hence in part comes the difficulty of estimating him.

The actual outlines of his life are known. As a youth he had been sent to Rome as a hostage for the good behaviour of Antiochus the Great. There he had made a study of politics and had acquired a high regard for Roman efficiency. In later years it must be remembered that Antiochus not only Hellenized, he Romanized too, trying to remodel Antioch as an eastern Rome and to make it the centre of a vast empire. On leaving Rome he went to Athens where he was quite carried away by the effect of the famous city 'of the violet crown'. He took up with enthusiasm the task which his house, following in the steps of Alexander, had always attempted—the bringing of all men under the influence of Greek ideas. It was not merely Greek religion but Greek civilization that he wished to establish. By this time the first strong tide of Hellenism, which had flowed forth as a result of the conquests of Alexander, had begun to ebb and the East was, in its turn, influencing the West. Hence the passion with which he tried to carry out his plans. It is important to remember

this universal aspect of Antiochus's labours, for otherwise we may regard him as merely endeavouring to upset the religion of one small people, the Jews.

The aspect of Greek culture which appealed most to Antiochus was the outward, spectacular side. He loved pomp and ceremony, and was himself remarkable for the charm of his manners. But his culture was only superficial; inwardly he was cruel and lacking in real cultivation. But alongside this superficial side we find in him a determination which was never daunted by either danger or opposition. His plans may have been ideal and visionary, but in attempting to carry them out he shewed practical ability as well as persistence.

On his accession Antiochus deposed Onias III, the reigning high priest at Jerusalem, and appointed in his place Jason, Onias's own brother. Jason at once began to Hellenize Jerusalem. He established a gymnasium and made the young men of the aristocracy adopt Greek dress; even the priests were led astray by their leader 'and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened to enjoy that which was unlawfully provided in the palaestra...making of no account the honours of their fathers, and thinking the glories of the Greeks best of all' (2 Macc. iv, 9 ff.). Jason even went so far as to send a contribution to the festival of Hercules; this, however, was too much for the messengers by whom he sent it and they quietly handed it over to be used in the equipment of galleys (2 Macc. iv, 18 ff.). But Jason, in spite of all his zeal, had to suffer the fate of his

predecessor and see himself supplanted by another. His successor Menelaus obtained his office by promising a higher rate of tribute, and he did not scruple to turn even the temple vessels into ready money for his own purposes. On the rumour of Antiochus's death during the Egyptian expedition of 170 B.C., Jason suddenly regained possession of Jerusalem, and a massacre of his opponents followed. He was sufficiently fortunate to escape before the return of the enraged Antiochus, leaving the inhabitants of the luckless city to pay for his misdeeds. Forgetting the traditional tolerance of his house, Antiochus gave them up to slaughter and to slavery, and then attempted to stamp out the worship of Jehovah in its entirety. The GOD of the Jews could not be treated like the gods of other nations and made to take His place in the great religious scheme which was to include all deities within Antiochus's dominions; conflict was inevitable since Jehovah would have 'no other gods in His presence'.

The attempt to suppress the worship of Jehovah led to a fierce outburst on the part of such Jews as had not been corrupted. The leaders were Mattathias, the priest of Modin and his five sons, who from the name given to Judas, the third of them, are often called the Maccabees. To follow out the struggle in its details is impossible here; it will suffice to say that a number of factors combined to help the heroic Jews in their rebellion. The full power of Syria could not be used against them, as war broke out with the Parthians; there were dynastic troubles in the

royal house, of which the Jewish leaders took full advantage; there were revolting generals; but above all, Rome in the background was ever scheming to weaken the Seleucid monarchy. No praise can be too high for the splendid achievements of Judas and his brothers, but the overwhelming might of the Syrian kings, could it have been concentrated against them, must in the end inevitably have crushed them.

The struggle of the Jews under the Maccabees has left us a priceless gift in the book of the Old Testament known as Daniel. Of the man Daniel we know nothing beyond the picture presented in the book. It is probable that the name comes from Ezek. xiii, 14, xxviii, 3, where it is used of a figure, presumably of pre-exilic times, remembered by the Jews in Babylon on account of his wisdom and righteousness. It is not necessary to enter into the arguments which have convinced critics that the book does not belong to the age of the Exile, but was actually produced amidst the contest which it professes to foretell. The fitness of the book to give endurance and courage to a people fighting for their faith is obvious on every page: it culminates in iii, 18, where the Three Children defy Nebuchadrezzar, and declare their determination to remain loyal to Jehovah even though He does not rescue them from the hands of their oppressor.

There are some who find difficulty in the idea that the people of God were thus sustained in their struggle by what is really nothing less than a work of fiction. Dr Gore,

in *The New Commentary* edited by him, has attempted to meet this difficulty, in the following words:

> We recall the fact that among many peoples moral courage—to stand faithfully to GOD against desperate odds—has been nourished largely on stories that are dramas or romances and not histories, on the courage of Antigone and the faithfulness of Cordelia and the faithfulness of Christian (in the *Pilgrim's Progress*) and the heroic devotion of Jeanie Deans. Why is it that all that is best in men and women has been so fortified by 'fiction'? Only because these stories were recognized as true to experience, as embodying in one ideal figure a multitude of such experiences (p. 546).

The success of the revolt restored to the Jews freedom of religious worship and an ever increasing measure of political liberty. But with the growth of power came the decay of ideals. Jonathan Maccabeus, having the actual power in his hands, usurped the office of high priest, although not of the family of Aaron. Thus, like Melchizedek (Gen. xiv, 18), he was priest and king. In the reign of his successor, Simon, the high priesthood was made hereditary in the Maccabean house. The next ruler, John Hyrcanus (135–105), on the strength of a vision which he claimed to have received in the Temple of a victory gained by his sons, was hailed as Prophet, Priest, and King.

The Maccabees had owed their success very largely to the support of the Puritan element in the nation. But the increasing worldliness of the Priest-kings now began definitely to alienate their most important friends. The growing sect of the Pharisees represented this party, and over against them was the aristocratic party of the Sadducees

which, after the quarrel between the Priest-kings and the Pharisees, became the official supporters of the former. These two sects, interesting to us on account of the part which they played in New Testament times, arose so gradually that it is not possible to trace out their actual origins. The members of the one party were sincerely devout and godly, but inclined to be narrowly exclusive, and, in consequence, critical and proud: the members of the other party were formal and worldly, the upholders of the powers that be. To the Sadducees belonged both the civil and military power: but behind their rivals were the majority of the scribes and the bulk of the common people.

The schism in the Jewish people, of which the two sects were the evidence though hardly the cause, hastened on the inevitable end—the loss of the last remnants of political freedom. In 66 B.C. Syria, in which Palestine was included, was declared a Roman province, and three years later Pompey, the Roman General, entered Jerusalem. The Temple was held against him but had to surrender, and on taking possession of it he actually went into the Holy of Holies, to the scandal of the Jews, but he did not seize the treasures. This happened in the consulship of Cicero. In 48 Pompey suffered defeat at the hands of Julius Caesar at Pharsalia, and was murdered soon afterwards as he attempted to land in Egypt. The Pharisees rejoiced over the terrible end of the man who had dared to enter the Temple, and in the Psalms of Solomon (ii, 30) gloated over the thought of his body lying on the sea-shore and 'borne

hither and thither by the billows with much insolence'. Caesar in his pursuit of Pompey came to Egypt, where he found himself in great difficulty, and no little danger, through a sudden rising which shut him up in the island of Pharos. In the efforts made to extricate him from his peril the Jews played a prominent part, under the leadership of a certain Idumæan (Edomite) chief, Aristobulus by name. As a reward for his help Aristobulus was given a place near the person of the Jewish high priest over whom he began at once to exercise great influence. His younger son, Herod, followed his father as the favourite of Rome, and, after some vicissitudes of fortune, was actually given the title of King of the Jews by the Roman senate. So the Jews lost their liberties, a tragic end to the noble efforts of the Maccabees. But no other end was really possible; the later Maccabees themselves, by their ambition and pride, had divided the nation, and so bitterly did the parties hate one another that party success was held more dear than national honour. Even in 63 B.C. one party told Pompey that rather than have the high priest subject to the king they would lose national independence (Josephus, *Antiq.* XIV, iii, 2.).

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

E. R. Bevan. *Jerusalem under the High Priests.* (Arnold.)

E. R. Bevan. *Environment of Israel from Maccabees to our Lord* (New Commentary, *Apocrypha*, pp. 1 ff.).

B. H. Alford. *Jewish History and Literature.* (Longmans.)

A. W. Streane. *The Age of the Maccabees.* (Eyre and Spottiswoode.)

Commentaries on Daniel as above and, in addition, A. A. Bevan, *The Book of Daniel.* (Cambridge.)

Commentaries on 1 and 2 Maccabees by W. O. E. Oesterley in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of Old Test.* and by J. W. Hunkin in New Commentary, *Apocrypha.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

FAITH AND REASON: SOME URGENT PROBLEMS

In our consideration of the Jewish people and their faith we have so far been limited almost entirely to the study of those books of the Old Testament which have a prophetic or historical character. It is true that in the previous chapter we left behind the Old Testament for the greater part and made use of Apocryphal books like 1 and 2 Maccabees, but that was for a record of the actual events, not for a discussion of their significance in the developement of ideas.

In the period after the Exile the Jews had the opportunity, since they no longer aspired after political power, of thinking out the problems which were raised by their history as a race, or their experience as individuals. The result was that during the whole of this long period they were continually engaged in trying to adjust their idea of God to the facts of life as they knew them. As part of this process must be included the collecting and editing of national records, and their interpretation in accordance with the changed opinions of the age. This inevitably meant that they had to modify their views of earlier times.

They found that this process reached no definite end (in fact it would be true to say that it is still being continued), as one problem was solved another was revealed. But it is only thus that any progress, in either science or philosophy, can be made. The reward of true discovery is fresh opportunity for advance.

The attempts to meet the problems which beset them as thinking men were not hampered by any concern for orthodoxy. As Robertson Smith has pointed out, ancient religions had for the most part no creeds, but consisted entirely of institutions and practices. Dogma was absent and its place taken by mythology, that is, the belief that certain rites were established by the command or the example of some god. Men might hold this explanation or that of the rite, but so long as they conformed to it there was no disloyalty. The Jews were not quite in such a primitive condition; they had but few articles in their creed, or perhaps one, that Jehovah was the only god to be worshipped by Israel. Apart from this there was entire freedom for speculation, and the Jewish thinkers used their freedom to the full, even in regard to such questions as the existence of spirits, the resurrection of the body, and the coming of a Messiah: to all of which questions orthodox Jews gave different answers. In a book like Tobit there is even found a combination of admirably 'orthodox' piety with a childish belief in magic arts.

The problems which they tackled were partly metaphysical (i.e. dealing with the unseen world) and partly

ethical (i.e. dealing with man's life and conduct in this present, visible world). A moment's reflexion, however, will shew us that for people like the Jews, whose every act was done in an atmosphere of religion, the two sets of problems must have considerably overlapped. A modern philosopher may discuss moral problems from a purely human point of view; such a discussion would have been inconceivable to an ancient Israelite.

In considering ethical and moral questions it is, of course, the abnormal and unusual which receives most attention. The quiet, law-abiding member of the community is taken for granted, as is the faithful wife and the upright father. Hence we must not be surprised if we find in books like Proverbs or Ecclesiasticus the constant mention of faithlessness to the marriage vow: these things were the problem. It is true that there must have been a good deal of this kind of conduct going on, as well as open robbery and the more subtle form of thieving which is the art of the ungodly merchant, but these books no more give a complete picture of the state of society than does our own daily press of conditions to-day.

The literature in which these problems were discussed is often called the 'Wisdom' literature. By wisdom, however, the ancient Hebrew did not mean exactly what we mean by it; it was something more than 'sound learning', though that was an important element; it had a moral element as well, and men could say that 'the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God' (cf. Prov. ix, 10; Job xxviii, 28).

Its supreme value is set forth in a noble passage from the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs:

> Get wisdom in the fear of God with diligence.
> For though there be a leading into captivity,
> And cities and lands be destroyed,
> And gold and silver and every possession perish,
> The wisdom of the wise can nought take away,
> Save the blindness of ungodliness or the callousness of sin.
> Even among his enemies shall wisdom be a glory to him,
> And in a strange country a fatherland.
>
> *Test. Levi* xiii, 7 f.

Included among this literature were not a few poems: the Psalms themselves, it must not be forgotten, were greatly concerned with moral problems, such as the prosperity of the wicked (see p. 99 below). It will be well at this point to turn aside for a moment to consider the Psalter a little more fully.

The Psalms have been called the 'Hymns, Ancient and Modern' of the Jewish Church. This is an apt title, for it brings out the fact that they come from different ages and different writers. The Psalter, as we have it, is divided into five books, ending at Ps. xli, lxxii, lxxxix, cvi, and cl respectively. It might seem that these five books represent a single collection which was afterwards split up: but the evidence we possess makes it almost certain that, on the contrary, different smaller collections have been amalgamated: for instance, the same Psalm is found over again in a different book (e.g. xiv=liii, xl, 13–17=lxx) and, most striking of all, in certain books the name Jehovah is

used almost to the exclusion of GOD (e.g. Book I), whilst in others the reverse is the case (e.g. Book II).

In popular speech we attribute the Psalter to David. This attribution is not accepted by modern scholars, and indeed it is not the belief of the editors who prefixed the titles to the Psalms when they added them to their collections: some Psalms are stated to be by other poets (e.g. many are attributed to Asaph, xc to Moses, lxxii to Solomon).[1] It is probable that David wrote some Psalms (cf. 2 Sam. i, 19 ff.), though to Amos he was known, apparently unfavourably, as an inventor of musical instruments, and also possibly as the composer of 'idle songs' (vi, 5). The tradition that he was in the habit of writing many songs probably rests on 2 Sam. xxiii, 1 'the sweet psalmist of Israel'; this is a possible translation of the Hebrew, and has been retained in the Revised Version; but the natural rendering is 'the darling of Israel's songs'; that is, the one who is celebrated in the songs of Israel—a national hero, not a national poet.

In the Psalter we have represented the devotional side of Hebrew religion, the laying bare of the soul to GOD: piety and a sure confidence in GOD, as well as a thirst for Him which nothing else can satisfy. Alongside this high level of religious aspiration there is, however, a darker side,

[1] It is doubtful whether 'A Psalm of David' really means a Psalm by David, or about David, or from a collection named after David: this is especially true of the Psalms of Asaph or the Sons of Korah.

and the conscience of Christian people has at length been aroused to the danger of repeating in public worship sentiments of hatred and derision which are certainly unworthy of the Gospel. But such passages are comparatively few, and the Psalter as a whole is unrivalled as a book of devotion. It seems to belong to no age and no country, and has therefore at all times and in every place been made the vehicle by which pious souls have expressed their own longings after God and their joy in His presence.

The personal element in the Psalms is very evident, but it is possible that in some cases the community itself, rather than the individual worshipper, is supposed to be the subject or the speaker. It seems probable, too, that the Psalms have been adapted and revised in order to meet the growing needs of the people, or to correct what were held to be mistaken views of the earlier writer (e.g. the last two verses of Ps. li, though in full accordance with later Jewish belief, are at variance with the burden of the Psalm as a whole, which sees no need for sacrifice of any kind).

Leaving on one side the important subject of the Future for treatment in the next chapter, we now come to deal with the actual problems which faced the Hebrew thinkers. These were mainly concerned with the very practical question of rewards and punishments, but they led ultimately to that grave problem, the solution of which still avoids us, the fact of pain and evil in the universe.

The writers of the Old Testament, since they had no

belief in a life for the individual after death (a life, that is, that was worth having), placed the entire drama of man's deeds and their reward and punishment within the limits of his life on earth. Prosperity was the reward of piety, and adversity the portion of wickedness. This was a simple and naïve belief, but quite obviously one which it was difficult to hold in the face of actual experience. Outside the Old Testament this doctrine of retribution had been worked out even in details, and the principle laid down by the writer of the Wisdom of Solomon, 'By what things a man transgresseth, by the same also he is punished' (xi, 16), received many illustrations. One striking example from the Book of Jubilees may be given. In iv, 31 it records the tradition that Cain was killed by the fall of his house, the stones of which slew him, since by a stone he had slain his brother.

To a people who held such material views of religion the tragedy of the Exile was a staggering blow. It is quite certain that the best elements of the nation, not only from a military, but also from a moral point of view, were removed from Jerusalem on its first capture (Jer. xxiv; Ezek. xii, xx, 37 ff.). Those who were left behind might flatter themselves on the superior merit which had allowed them to remain in Jehovah's own land, but the really pious knew better—and the problem was an acute one even then. It became still more acute as the teaching of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel, that the innocent were not to suffer for the sins of the guilty, the children for the fathers (Jer. xxxi, 30;

Ezek. xviii), began to spread among them. This had seemed so easy a way out. Just as the Hindoo can put down the undeserved misfortunes which a man may encounter to some crime committed in a previous existence, so the Hebrew, with his strong sense of the continuance of the family life through each separate generation, could account for the same phenomenon on the supposition that some sin of the father was now being worked out in punishment on the son. Contemporary methods of revenge no doubt gave force to this solution.

But not only did righteous men suffer, there were also many sinners who 'flourished like a green bay tree'. How were they to be fitted into a religious system which still clung to material wealth as the test of a right relation to God? This problem troubled several of the Psalmists. In Ps. xxxvii the writer may affirm that in the experience of a long lifetime he had never 'seen the righteous forsaken' in the end, and that the wicked sooner or later had been cut down, but other men must have realized that they had not been so fortunate. In Ps. lxxiii the writer, in his distress, goes into the sanctuary of God, and there finds a similar solution to the problem: the wicked are exalted only to be brought down with more utter destruction. This might console the pious in individual cases but the problem itself still remained.

Let us turn again to the other side of the problem, the misfortunes of the righteous. The writer or writers of the book of Job set themselves to solve this problem. Here

was the case of a man abundantly righteous, and yet misfortunes came upon him. Why was it? Some said at once (and no doubt many individuals had had the same judgement passed on them in real life) that he was a hypocrite, one who used piety as a screen behind which to commit dreadful crimes. The writer of the prologue (i and ii) and epilogue (xlii, 7–17) holds the orthodox view, that these misfortunes were but to test him, and that in the end he would have all restored to him. The finest thing in the drama is, however, the attitude of Job himself: he will trust GOD even though He slay him (xiii, 15), and is confident that his Vindicator will arise, though he himself may by that time be no more (xix, 25). This was the attitude of Jeremiah when he ventured to plead with the Almighty concerning his own sufferings (Jer. xii, 1), and it is the only attitude of the devout servant of GOD in any age. It is better to be with GOD in torment, than in rapture without Him: 'In His will is our peace'.[1]

All these attempts at solution, it will be noted, restrict the problem, as well as the solution, to the term of man's life, unless indeed Job xix, 26 f. refer to a resurrection of the body.[2] It was not long, however, before men's minds began to move out beyond such narrow limits in an attempt to find a solution by comprehending a wider sphere: in the next chapter we shall see how the doctrine of a future

[1] Dante, *Paradiso* III, 85.

[2] This is most unlikely in view of xiv, 7 ff.

life was brought in to rectify the injustices of the present existence.

The problem of sin, of offences against GOD, how was that dealt with? To the earlier prophets all that was required was the turning back to GOD in penitence and sorrow (e.g. Hos. xiv, 1 ff.); as we have seen, they felt no need of the sacrificial system (see p. 62 above).[1] But even those who advocated the sacrificial system saw in it a divine gift, rather than a human device for obtaining forgiveness (Lev. xvii, 11). If we take the limitations of Lev. iv, 2 strictly, sacrifices are an atonement only for those who 'sin unwittingly'; the deliberate sinner had no remedy even in the sacrificial system (Num. xv, 30). It seems hardly possible that such limitations were actually made in Israel, and we may safely suppose that for those who lived within a convenient distance of a sanctuary, or at any rate of Jerusalem, sacrifice was a normal means of atonement for every sin.

But what of those who lived in 'unclean' lands amongst the Dispersion, where sacrifice could not be offered? Among them, and indeed among other Jews, there seems to have been a tendency to substitute 'good works' for sacrifice. Nebuchadrezzar is advised 'to break off' sins by righteousness (Dan. iv, 27), whilst the writer of Ecclesiasticus sees in almsgiving a means of atonement (iii,

[1] This, it should be noted, is also the teaching of the Parable of the Prodigal Son: the father is waiting to forgive, but the son must come to himself and return (Lk. xv, 11 ff.).

30)[1] and the Psalms of Solomon commend fasting (iii, 9). There was still another idea, which gradually became prominent in later Judaism, the idea of mediation. The earliest instances of it are limited to appeals made to GOD: e.g. Moses on behalf of his people (Ex. xxxii, 11 ff.), and Job for his friends (xlii, 8 f.). Even those who were not still on this earth seem to have been supposed to have this power in later times (e.g. Jeremiah (2 Macc. xv, 14)), whilst angels are frequently appealed to for their prayers (Job v, 1, xxxiii, 24; Tobit xii, 12; Enoch ix, 3, xcix, 3).[2] The whole idea receives its highest developement in the figure of the Suffering Servant who is wounded for the sins of others and gives his soul as an offering for sin (Is. liii, 4 ff.).

Before leaving the question of offences and their consequences, we must now consider the subject of offences committed not against GOD, but by a man against his neighbour. The law said 'an eye for an eye' (Ex. xii, 23 ff.), but even in the Old Testament there were those who felt that this was not the highest mode of dealing with offenders (Prov. xxv, 21 f., xxiv, 29) especially with a brother Jew (Lev. xix, 17 f.).[3] In the later writings there is a gradually

[1] The Talmud taught that almsgiving was more than all sacrifices (*Sukkah*, 59 *b*).

[2] On this subject see further 'The Intercession of Saints in Jewish Literature', by the present writer in *Jeremiah* (West. Com.), pp. 129 f.

[3] This spirit is, of course, exceptional; the prevailing tone is that of the Psalmist (Ps. xli, 10, cxxxvii, 8 f.):—perhaps the most horrible example is 1 Kings ii, 6, 8 f.).

growing appreciation of the attitude becoming to the children of a merciful GOD. In Ecclus. xxviii, 2, those who forgive their neighbour are promised forgiveness when they themselves pray (cf. Mk. xi, 25). But the highest point is reached in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, where forgiveness is to be extended not only to an adversary who confesses his offence but to one who remains obstinate: 'if he be shameless and persist in his wrongdoing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging' (*Test. Gad* VI).[1]

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

J. P. PETERS. *The Religion of the Hebrews*, pp. 329 ff. (Ginn.)

A. NAIRNE. *The Faith of the Old Testament*, pp. 100 ff. (Longmans).

A. S. PEAKE. *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament* (Robert Bryant, London.)

Commentaries on Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus.

[1] The above paragraph is based on Charles, *Between the Old and New Testaments*, pp. 133–158.

CHAPTER NINE

THE FUTURE (ESCHATOLOGY)

SPECULATIONS as to the origin of the world in which he lives, and as to its end (eschatology), have always attracted man, when once the stage of savagery has been passed. At one time it was thought that such speculations in Hebrew literature were a sign of late date, but this is no longer held by most scholars, and it is at least possible that many of the most characteristic ideas of the Hebrews were originally taken over by their forefathers from the Sumerians.

Visions of the last days are especially common when all things seem to be going wrong, and Utopias are usually the dreams of men who despair of their own age. Sometimes, indeed, it is to the past, rather than to the future, that the thoughts are turned in the search for happier days; but this is more characteristic of the Greek than of the Jew.[1]

In their visions of the future the prophets made a lavish use of all kinds of imagery. Often enough it is difficult, if not impossible, to know what is meant to be symbolical

[1] 'The golden age of the Gentile was in the past: his poets told him of it, and how it was gone. The Jew's golden age was in the future: his prophets told him to look forward to its coming.' Armitage Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 57.

and what literal fact. The amazing language of Joel ii, 10, for example, with its description of a quaking earth and a shuddering heaven, is it to be taken merely as a poetical device or as foretelling the actual signs of the times? Outside the Old Testament itself there is a large body of literature which is deeply interested in eschatology. Much of this literature is what is known as Pseudepigraphal: that is, the author has concealed his own name, and in order to give added weight to his message and to secure it a wider public, has sent forth his book under the name of some well known figure. Examples of this method are found in the Old Testament itself in the Proverbs of Solomon and the book of Daniel, but beyond it we get the various books of Enoch, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (i.e. the twelve sons of Jacob), and so forth. In these books there is an even more imaginative use of imagery. Often their use of symbols is, as Abrahams says:

> ...weird and grotesque enough. You try in vain to visualize them—a woman booted in sun and moon and crowned with twelve stars—or four-faced, four-winged, calf-footed, man-handed creatures of the chariot—or giants with flaming faces and burning eyes, with lips belching flame, clothed in purple, golden-pinioned, snow-fingered—or Eve, standing up to her neck in water surrounded by every manner of swimming thing and all the other properties of a pantomime nightmare. So, too, with Enoch's ice-fire edifices, and mystic trees, and the incongruous and unrealizable monsters generally which crowd the Apocalyptic canvas. (*Judaism*, pp. 37 f.)

On the other hand, the visions of the felicity of the future, with the flowering desert and the rivers on the hill

tops (Is. xli, 18 f., etc.), are surely the language of symbolism. This is a question which needs to be faced, since it becomes acute in the eschatological passages in the New Testament, which are obviously borrowed from the Old. Another difficulty arises from the close connexion between religious and political dreams. Jehovah, since His fate is closely linked up with that of His people, must avenge them; and so religion and politics are really inseparable. It must be remembered that the prophets in their visions thought little, if anything, of the individual, but everything of the race. If their visions are approached from this point of view the difficulty is lessened: they are not concerned with the salvation of the souls of men, but with the survival of a nation. That is why the doctrine of the Resurrection hardly emerges in the Old Testament itself.

The predominant teaching of the Old Testament is that death is the end of all real life for mankind. A shadowy existence in the hidden depths of Sheol (= the grave, or Hades) might be possible; but since those in Sheol were cut off from GOD'S care and love, they could no longer even worship Him (see among other passages: Is. xxxviii, 18 f.; Job vii, 9; Ps. vi, 5, xxx, 9, lxxxviii, 5, 11 f., cxv, 17). Man is thus in much the same position as the beasts which perish (Eccles. iii, 19, ix, 4 f.).

If this was the predominant belief of the Old Testament, how, it may be asked, did the idea of a resurrection arise, and ultimately triumph? It was in part the result of man's

failure to solve the problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous (see above, pp. 99 ff.). So long as a life here below was the complete existence of man, the problem appeared to be insoluble: but the more men thought over their experience, the deeper became their conviction that there must be a life beyond this in which all its injustices would find redress. But it was not along this line only that men's thoughts moved towards this conclusion. The developement of the idea of the Messianic Kingdom led them in the same direction.

In the earlier prophets the idea of national revival or resurrection is frequently found (e.g. Hos. vi, 1 f.; Ezek. xxxvii, 12), and after a time the growing importance of individuals as members of the revived community led to the idea of their rising to take their share in it; this resurrection was, of course, limited to the just (Is. xxvi, 19; Dan. xii, 1 f.). In this form the doctrine rapidly spread, and even as late as the first century B.C. some held that sinners would not rise (cf. Ps. Sol. xiii, 13, 'the destruction of the sinner shall be for ever'). But the influence of the other line of developement was making itself felt and, alongside the resurrection to share in the bliss of the Kingdom, there was set the resurrection to judgement. Although this doctrine was developed so late in the history of Judaism, it speedily made its way, except among the Sadducees; and not long before the birth of our Lord it seems to have been taken as a matter of course (Wisdom i, 13 ff., ii, 22 f.: cf. John xi, 24). The highest grounds upon which im-

mortality can be attributed to man were, however, but vaguely surmised, and it was not until our Lord Himself illuminated the subject, that it was seen that those who have been worthy of the friendship of GOD will not be deprived of that joy by the dissolution of their bodies (Lk. xx, 37 f.).

We come now to the vast and complex subject of the future, not of the individual, but of the nation, and indeed of all nations. This has its centre in the conception of what is sometimes called the Messianic Kingdom. But as this idea of the Kingdom did not, as we shall see below, always include a Messiah, it is perhaps better to call it, by anticipation, the Kingdom of GOD, the name by which it is known in the New Testament. This idea, like much else in Hebrew religion, had very humble beginnings. In its earliest form it appeared as the Day of the Lord; the day, that is, when Jehovah will vindicate Himself against His enemies and bring triumph to his people (Zeph. i, 12–ii). At that time men had not yet risen above the idea of Jehovah as the GOD of Israel only, and so their ideas of the Kingdom were narrow and incomplete: but the conception was a splendid one and a manifestation of the intense faith of Israel.

This aspect of the subject has been well put by Hogg in his small book, *Christ's Message of the Kingdom*: 'The idea of the coming "Kingdom of God" was, on its human side, a great venture of faith. It was a glowing vision by means of which Hebrew faith learned to continue trusting God in

spite of appearances—to continue believing Him to be Light in spite of all shadows of darkness' (p. 11).

In its most highly developed form the doctrine of the Kingdom included not a few contradictory ideas. These we must now consider. For the sake of clearness (so far as it can be attained on the subject) we will divide the evidence under five headings: (*a*) the coming of the Kingdom, (*b*) its scene, (*c*) its members, (*d*) its Ruler, (*e*) its duration.

(*a*) *The coming of the Kingdom.*

The most important point to be noted is that all parties were agreed that the Kingdom would be inaugurated by God Himself; it was to be His gift, and no device of man could bring it to pass. The prevalent idea was that it would come suddenly, as on the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii, 13 f.; cf. Enoch lxxxiii–xc), though the possibility that it would come gradually is also found occasionally (Jub. xxiii, 26–28), an idea which was taken up vigorously by some Jewish teachers after the fall of the Temple in 70 A.D. As in later ages, men were keenly anxious to know when the Kingdom was to come, and various attempts were made to forecast the time. In Jer. xxiii, 5 f., xxiv, 5 f., the date seems to be seventy years after the fall of Jerusalem. Again, Haggai and Zechariah promised the Kingdom on the rebuilding of the Temple. Later again, the writer of Daniel, taking the seventy years of Jeremiah as weeks of years (i.e. 490 years), dated the coming Kingdom within three and a half years

of the time of his writing. Since that day, with equal ingenuity and equal lack of success, the unduly curious have striven to pry into the secret counsels of the Almighty (cf. Mk. xiii, 32).

(*b*) *The scene of the Kingdom.*

In the earliest stages of the idea the Kingdom was to be in Israel's own land—no other place could have entered into the mind of a patriotic and pious Jew. But later the idea became extended and the present earth seems to be the site, and later again the present earth and heaven after a process of transformation (Is. lxv, 17, lxvi, 22). Then in the second century B.C. men began to despair of any amendment of the present state of things and conceived the idea of an entirely new earth and heaven; a spiritual state into which flesh and blood could not enter.

(*c*) *The members of the Kingdom.*

To the primitive Israelites, who believed in Jehovah as a local deity only, the members of the Kingdom were naturally enough to be Israelites. But with the acceptance of the idea of Jehovah as the GOD of the whole universe the question was raised to a higher plane. Two distinct views then began to prevail. One party, which traced itself back to Ezekiel, held that the new idea of Jehovah made no difference: Israel was still His peculiar people, and the nations were to have no share in the Kingdom. This may be termed the prevailing view of post-exilic Judaism. The

other party went back to Jeremiah. They held the contrary opinion that since Jehovah was GOD of all men, all nations should find a place within His Kingdom (Jer. iii, 17 f.; Is. xix, 16 ff.). There is in Jeremiah also, it would seem, a different and more mystical idea, by which Israelites, and ultimately men of all nations, may enter into the Kingdom, by God Himself dwelling in their hearts (xxxi, 31: cf. Is. lvii, 15).

A few words on the fate of the Gentiles may be inserted here. In the earliest days they were naturally not considered at all. Then came the idea that they would be turned to Jehovah (Ps. lxxii, 11, 17), but, even so, with no hope of having more than a degraded position in the Kingdom; they were to be slaves, the *helots* of Israel (Is. xii, 2), or, if they refused this office, destruction was to be their portion (Is. lx, 12).[1] In later times there was a sharp difference of opinion on the subject. Some, with a universal outlook, like the writer or writers of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, expected a time when all the Gentiles would be gathered to Jehovah (*Test. Simeon* vii, 2; *Test. Benj.* ix, 2), a point of view shared by the writer of Enoch xc, 30. In a strange book attributed to Baruch a distinction is made between those who have never known Israel—these are to be saved—and those who knew them or ruled over them—for such there will be no mercy (2 Bar. lxxii, 4–6). Later

[1] In these passages it is not always clear whether the reference is to the future Messianic Kingdom or to the people in a more normal state.

on feeling became gradually harder and narrower, and annihilation became the appointed lot of all Gentiles (Enoch xxxvii–lxx; 4 Esdras xiii, 37 ff.), one of the chief tasks of the Messiah being to slay them with his own hand (4 Esdras xii, 33).

(*d*) *The Ruler of the Kingdom.*

In the earlier prophets there is no mention of any Messiah; Jehovah Himself is to rule over His Kingdom: so in Amos, Zeph., Nahum, Hab., Joel, Daniel, and some late passages in Isaiah (xxiv–xxvii, liv, 11 ff., lx–lxii, lxv–lxvi). In some of the books outside the Old Testament also the Messiah is disregarded; e.g. 1 and 2 Maccabees, Judith, and Tobit. In view of this Dr Charles concludes that 'the Messiah was no essential part of the kingdom' (*op. cit.* p. 76). In the writings which contain a promise or recognition of a Messiah, there is an exceedingly interesting variety of opinion as to his identity. The earliest idea is that of the revival of the Davidic kingdom with David himself as king (Ezek. xxxiv, 21 ff., xxxvii, 21 ff.). But in the period of the Exile Cyrus, a heathen king, is hailed as Messiah (Is. xlv, 1); a little later again Zerubbabel is to be Messiah (see above, pp. 68 f.). Then came a wave of disillusionment, and the whole idea of a Messiah is given up. On the revival of Jewish life under the Maccabees, however, the project again came into favour; but with one striking difference, the Messiah was no longer to be a member of the tribe of Judah, but of that of Levi. There

can be but little doubt that it was from the Levite family of the Maccabees that he was to come, and possibly men hoped that the office might be successfully undertaken by Simon Maccabaeus himself, that Simon in whose honour Ps. cx was written. But again disillusionment followed with the decline of the Maccabean house. Then a new idea appears in Enoch xxxvii–lxxi—that of the Son of Man, a mysterious creation different from, though perhaps suggested by, the 'son of man' of Dan. vii, 13, who is merely a typical human being. Last of all, the Davidic Messiah was revived in the Psalms of Solomon, a work produced under Pharisaic influences.

(*e*) *The duration of the Kingdom.*

The Kingdom from the earliest ideas of it was to be for evermore (Ezek. xxxvii, 28; Dan. vii, 27); nothing less would have satisfied the longings of those who looked for its appearing. But this did not mean that those who shared in it were to live for ever: their lives were indeed to be of patriarchal length (Is. lxv, 20) but death would at last overtake them. In later days, when the Kingdom was thought of as a heavenly one only, there was brought in the conception of a preliminary Messianic kingdom upon this earth of temporary duration. According to some, this was to last four hundred years (4 Edras vii, 28 f.), but according to others, a full thousand (Enoch i–xxxvi). This latter period is the same as that mentioned in Rev. xx, 2 ff., which no doubt follows the older tradition, and so is

the origin of what is known as the Millennium. The most fully developed idea of the Kingdom itself is that it is to be eternal in the heavens (Sibylline Oracles iii, 50; Secrets of Enoch xlii, 3; 1 Thes. iv, 17).

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

R. H. Charles. *Between the Old and New Testaments.* (Home Univ. Lib.)

R. H. Charles. *Eschatology.* (A. & C. Black.)

R. H. Charles. *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life.* (A. & C. Black.)

W. O. E. Oesterley. *Immortality and the Unseen World.* (S.P.C.K.)

J. P. Peters. *The Religion of the Hebrews*, pp. 425 ff. (Ginn.)

H. F. Hamilton. *The People of God*, 1, pp. 189 ff. (Oxford.)

F. C. Burkitt. *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses.* (Oxford.)

CHAPTER TEN

THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

JUDAISM received its crown and fulfilment in Jesus, the Messiah or Christ. This statement, although accepted in theory has not, until quite recent years, been allowed sufficient weight. Even so great a scholar as Schürer, whose work, *The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, is now a classic, seems hardly to allow sufficient credit to Judaism for the part which it played in the genesis of Christianity. If we take the Old and New Testaments as they stand, there undoubtedly appears to be an enormous gulf between them, and the debt of the New to the Old seems to be less than actually it is. But when the mass of literature, to which reference has already frequently been made, which belongs to the two centuries before Christ is brought into consideration, the gulf is filled, and in its place there is seen a gradual developement.

When we think of the obscure, and even doubtful, origins of Judaism, we feel perhaps at first a shrinking from thus so closely associating the Gospel with it. But this feeling is unworthy; for the miracle of Judaism lies in the very fact that, from such humble beginnings, it reached such majestic heights of spiritual attainment. That the

'deepest creed the world has ever known' should have sprung 'out of the feeble movements of a petty clan of highlanders', as Canon Nairne once put it,[1] should not surprise us, since it has always been the divine method to work through instruments which the world in its blindness has seen fit to despise.

The apostle of the Gentiles told the Galatians that the Christ was born 'in the fulness of the time' (Gal. iv, 4). This statement is not likely to be challenged by anyone who has even a superficial acquaintance with the conditions of the world into which our Lord came. Space will not allow more than a brief mention of some of the most important factors in the position. Speaking in general terms, it may be said that three different lines of preparation had at that moment reached their highest point of perfection when taken as a whole. These were the three influences which arose respectively from Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome.

Rome was the mistress of the world at this epoch. Beneath her firm hand wars and quarrels had for the time come to an end, the *Pax Romana* was everywhere observed. This was a great advantage to the future missionaries of the gospel, especially when it is remembered that with the *Pax Romana* there went a breaking down of the boundaries which separate nation from nation. These same missionaries were also to find in the Roman roads a

[1] *The Faith of the Old Testament*, p. 11.

ready means of travelling from one part of the empire to another (a study of the journeys of St Paul reveals this very strikingly). Rome's preparation was thus material rather than spiritual, but it is possible that the conception of a single world empire helped to make men feel the need for a single religion (the deification of the emperor is perhaps a symptom of this), whilst the organization of the empire gave to the Church a model upon which to work.

The task of the Greeks was more spiritual. They had to work out a universal language which should be the means of conveying the Gospel to every part of the empire of their conquerors. In the days of Athens' greatest glory the barriers of local and national feeling would have made Greek only a poor medium: but Alexander, with his dream of a world culture, and then the Romans, had swept away such barriers and allowed Greek a free course. Already the Jews of Alexandria had translated the Old Testament into Greek, and the famous Jewish philosopher and mystic, Philo, was at the date of our Lord's birth striving to reconcile Greek and Hebrew ideals. The work which the Jews of the Dispersion, all unconsciously, were doing to prepare the way for the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles was to prove very valuable.

We turn now to Judaism. In considering the part which it played in preparing for the coming of our Lord we must take into account both the weaknesses which made its

adherents turn to the newer faith, and also the virtues which made its successor so strong. Our enquiry will conclude with an attempt to assess the extent to which Jesus Himself was indebted in His teaching to the prophets and wise men who went before Him.

In his sketch of 'the Darker Side of Contemporary Judaism'[1] Sanday puts in the forefront a too exclusive emphasis on the transcendence of GOD. 'It had no adequate means of spanning the gulf between GOD and man. The faults of Judaism were those of Deism.' This is a just criticism, and Jehovah, for the multitude of Jews, was hidden away behind a whole host of ceremonial and legal observances.[2] The Law was indeed 'a tutor to bring men to Christ' (Gal. iii, 24), but the tutor, forgetful of the limitations of his office, had become a tyrant. To keep the Law had become almost an end in itself. Hence there came a growing temptation to substitute legal and even ceremonial righteousness for a genuine love of justice and all other virtues. Moreover the insistence on the strict observance of the Law in all its details, made men forget that obedience might arise from very different kinds of motive: in Judaism the whole question of motive seemed to have passed out of sight. The Law itself was so sacred that it must have a 'hedge' of human traditions around it, tradi-

[1] *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, p. 13. (Reprinted from H.D.B.)

[2] This also led to a materialistic outlook on revelation: 'Jews desire signs', as St Paul put it (1 Cor. i, 22).

tions which might add to its outward splendour, but which often defeated its true end (cf. Mk. vii, 11 f.). The average Jew must have found the petty rules which beset his daily path a perpetual burden: though to one who had time to make 'religion' the chief business of life they were only too welcome; the Pharisee praying at the street corner is the typical product of this class. But the scorn of the Pharisee for the Publican was no recommendation of the religion in which he delighted (cf. Mt. vii, 1 ff.; Lk. xviii, 9 ff.).

The observance of the Law thus ministered to the spiritual pride of the individual: it also ministered to that pride of race which was one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of Judaism if it desired to fulfil its mission to the world. The rite of circumcision and the strict observance of the Sabbath were at once the badge of the faithful Jew and the mark of his separation. So deeply implanted in the mind and conscience of the Jew were these practices, that even the power of the Gospel could not, in many cases, rid him of them. The troubles which came upon St Paul from the Judaizers (i.e. those who insisted that Gentile Christians should first become Jews by circumcision) are notorious: and not seldom our Lord Himself was condemned for offending against their feelings for the Sabbath. Knowing the history of the Jewish people and the splendid heroism with which they clung to their Law in face of persecution and temptation to apostasy, we

must not be too eager to condemn them. With them, as with many others, the consciousness of great privileges, and privileges which they had preserved in the face of grave dangers, led to a reliance upon them which was fatal to all religious and moral progress. They were the children of Abraham and that was all sufficient (cf. Lk. iii, 8; Jo. viii, 33, 39).

From the consideration of these weaknesses we pass on to that other side which gave to Judaism its real power. The very weaknesses of the Law were, as Gwatkin has pointed out, 'a pledge of hope', for 'the conception of GOD as perfect goodness turned every imperfection into a promise and a prophecy of better things to come'.[1] It was in the Jewish conception of GOD, as holy, righteous, and careful for His people that Jesus was to find a foundation upon which to build the higher idea of Him as the all-loving Father. Judaism once and for all had arrived at the conclusion, though only after much wandering from the right way, that GOD was One. The importance of this conclusion can hardly be exaggerated. In polytheism, as for example among the Greeks and Romans, the gods worked against one another, and the general impression left upon the mind is one of a confusion which sooner or later breeds contempt. The Hebrew conception did away with the confusion, and so avoided the occasion for contempt. At times it is true that human feelings, not of the highest kind, are

[1] *The Knowledge of God*, II, 46.

attributed to Jehovah, but there is nothing parallel to the puerilities and profanities of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*; Jehovah still remains a GOD worthy of man's adoration. To hand on to Christianity the lesson of adoration, even though not fully worked out, was surely a great achievement. It has been said of one of the greatest religious teachers of recent years (Von Hügel) that the essence of religion for him lay in adoration coupled with heroic virtue. That the Jew was capable of heroic virtue would be denied by none: this then must be added to the rich heritage which the Church received from the Synagogue.

But in teaching that GOD was One, and that He was perfect goodness, the Jews raised serious problems which, as we have seen, they did not succeed in solving. Their failures or, it would be more true to say, their unsuccessful attempts, were of service to Christianity in so far as they pointed out where the problems lay, an exceedingly important matter. In the endeavour to reconcile the following of Jehovah with earthly misfortune, the Jews were led on to the question of the Future Life, both as it concerned the nation and the individual. This in the New Testament is carried forward a stage further in the teaching on the Kingdom of GOD. Furthermore, in following out these eschatological ideas Judaism was led back once more into a relation with the world at large, and to some extent raised above its proud isolation: visions of the end of the age must take some account of other peoples beside the

Jewish nation. It is perhaps because of this that the three centuries before the Christian era saw a revival of interest in the Gentiles and a desire to spread Judaism among them.[1]

When Gibbon summed up the reasons for the rapid spread of the Christian Church he included among them the zeal of the early disciples and the fact that they possessed, in contradiction to the pagans, a professional priesthood and organization. The idea of both of these came from their Jewish forefathers. In fact the first attempts at organization were simply developements from the synagogue. Furthermore, the temple itself and the whole system of sacrificial worship brought before the Christians ideas of sin and of atonement with which they had to reckon.

Our Lord claimed that it was the function of the faithful householder to bring out of his stores things both new and old (Mt. xiii, 52). His own teaching was an example of this method. Through the study of Jewish literature outside the Old Testament we have come to realize that the amount of the 'old' was very much greater than at one time had been supposed: in fact it would be true to say that practically all the teaching of Jesus finds earlier parallels in Jewish literature. This fact must not however be allowed to lead us too far (cf. Renan's paradoxical statement that Philo was the elder brother of Jesus), since it is one thing to find a

[1] See an article by Box in *Church Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1922.

number of isolated parallels, and quite another to compare the teaching as a whole. The older literature was full of childish and unworthy ideas, it was confused and contradictory (cf. Chapter IX above). From His predecessors Jesus took all that was most worthy and, rejecting by His supreme spiritual insight all that was less valuable, He made of its diverse elements something that was really new. In one sense Christianity was a developed Judaism (Mt. v, 17); in another it was something so revolutionary that the old religion was to be rent asunder in its efforts to contain it (Mt. ix, 17).

Of the different strands which went to make up the threefold cord of Jewish religion, the prophetic, the priestly, and the apocalyptic, Jesus seems to have made but little use of the second: this was left to St Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews to work out. The apocalyptic strand, however, was taken up and developed by Him. He found in its symbolism a ready means of putting forth His own eschatological teaching, teaching which impressed itself deeply upon the primitive Christians. But it was with the first of these aspects of Judaism that he most fully sympathized. He was above all a reviver of the old prophetic religion. This has been well put by Box:

> It must not be forgotten that our Lord's attitude towards the old religion of Israel was that of the prophet rather than the priest. The fulfilment of the Law of which He spoke was essentially prophetic in character. He breathed into it fresh life, deepened and extended its moral significance and claim. And

above all, He took up a position towards it of sovereign freedom. It is in the prophetic Scriptures that He finds the most adequate expression of His own Messianic consciousness, especially in Isaiah liii. The people instinctively recognized in the new teacher the voice of a prophet. And in fact the whole character of the Christian movement depicted in the New Testament is prophetic. The Day of Pentecost marked the outpouring of the prophetic spirit and gifts. 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'[1]

From the beginning of their history the Jews had always been looking forward to the coming of a prophet (cf. Deut. xviii, 18). In the centuries before the advent of Christ the people were all too conscious that they no longer had the guidance of such messengers (1 Macc. ix, 27), though not without the hope that soon a prophet would come to solve their problems (1 Macc. iv, 46), and to bring forth salvation (*Test. Benjamin* ix. 2). The great prophecy of Mal. iv, 5 (Heb. iii, 23 f.) that Elijah was to come as the herald of the Day of the Lord must constantly have been in their minds (cf. Ecclesiasticus xlviii, 12). In our Lord's own day this expectation was especially vivid (cf. Lk. ii, 38), hence when the rumour went round concerning John the Baptizer we can understand the feelings which led the multitudes to flock to hear him.

[1] *Expositor*, July 1919, pp. 10 f.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

Essay XIV in *The People and the Book.*

H. F. Hamilton. *The People of God*, I, pp. 215 ff. (Oxford.)

Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. *The Beginnings of Christianity*, I, pp. 1–168. (Macmillan.)

G. F. Moore. *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era.* (Harvard University Press.)

I. Abrahams. *Judaism.* (Archibald Constable & Co.)

G. Dalman. *The Words of Jesus.* (T. and T. Clarke.)

W. O. E. Oesterley. *The Religious Background of the New Testament in Jewish Thought* in New Commentary, *New Testament*, pp. 9 ff.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THERE are many good Introductions to the Old Testament, among the best are those by S. R. Driver, G. B. Gray, and E. Sellin. So also there are numerous Old Testament histories: of these G. W. Wade, *Old Testament History* (Methuen), is to be recommended. Works dealing with the Religion of the Hebrews have been written by H. W. Robinson, H. P. Smith, J. P. Peters, and many others. Commentaries are many and varied. The leading series, the International Critical, is, as a whole, too advanced for the users of this volume; but other series are to be commended: the Westminster Commentaries (West. Com.), the Cambridge Bible (Camb. B.), the Century Bible, as well as the single volume commentaries edited by Peake (P.C.) and Gore (New C.). Many useful articles are to be found in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (H.D.B), *Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. The latest developements of scholarship are contained in the volume of essays written by members of the Society for Old Testament Study and published under the title of *The People and the Book*. Further notes on books, to be used in conjunction with the above, will be found at the end of each chapter. Fuller information about contemporary history may be found in D. G. Hogarth, *The Ancient East* (Home University Library), N. H. Baynes, *Israel among the Nations* (Student Christian Movement), and the *Cambridge Ancient History* (C.A.H.).

THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By

J. W. HUNKIN

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE letters of St Paul bring us into contact with groups of people scattered over the eastern part of the Roman Empire about the middle of the first century of our era. We are shewn something of their ideas and customs. Here they are, living men and women, thinking and doing; united in a great fellowship, conscious of a great experience. Who are they? What does it all mean?

The purpose of the following chapters is to take the Church in being as we can learn about it from the New Testament: to study it as it is actually presented to us, and to find out something about its origin and developement.

Our main source consists of a few letters written by St Paul at short intervals, certainly within the period A.D. 45–65. For later developements which took place in thought and practice after St Paul's death we have the documents contained in the rest of the New Testament; most of them difficult to date exactly, but undoubtedly giving us some of the main ideas entertained by the Christians about their religion at the end of the first century A.D. For a picture of the Christians in Palestine in the earliest days before the conversion of St Paul we have partly to work back from the Apostle's letters and partly to examine the primitive tradition so far as it is contained in the early chapters of Acts. It is convenient to start with the latter.

Thus our plan will be as follows: we begin with a study of the pre-Pauline Church; the experience of the first disciples and their theology and the beginnings of Christianity as a movement. Here we are chiefly concerned with Acts i–xi, 18 (Chapters I–III). Then, after a rapid survey (Chapter IV) of the general conditions in the Gentile world, we come to the teaching of St Paul. The main points of this teaching are considered in Chapters V and VI. Chapter VII deals with the effect of such preaching in the expansion of the Church in the Gentile world. The next chapter (VIII) shews how the Christians settled down after their first excitements, and is followed, in Chapter IX, by a picture of their daily life. Finally in Chapter X an attempt is made to give a brief account of the philosophical interpretation of itself, which, towards the end of the New Testament period, Christianity began to give to the educated world.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

IN spite of the death of their Master in the most shocking and distressing circumstances the little band of disciples soon rallied in a very surprising manner, and from the book of Acts and from the Epistles of St Paul we may gather how it was.

It is the former, dating in all probability from the last quarter of the first century A.D., which gives us the only continuous history of the rise and growth of the Christian movement. And even that is a mere sketch; and, particularly at the beginning, its evidence, at that point admittedly not first-hand, is meagre and difficult to interpret.

The Epistles of St Paul help us to eke it out a little. These Epistles are letters, real letters written to the Apostle's friends, often in answer to special inquiries, and generally upon ethical and theological subjects. Still they contain many allusions to historical situations, and on several important points they are our earliest and best authority.

We should have expected that when the disciples saw that Jesus was really dead, that no interposition of GOD had intervened, and that He who they hoped should have redeemed Israel (Lk. xxiv, 21) had actually been crucified as a criminal by order of the Roman governor, they would have scattered and gone back to their homes. They were mostly men from Galilee and they would naturally have returned thither to their old occupations. Perhaps some

did so. Others, however, remained, their common distress itself tending to keep them together.

There seems to have been a room in Jerusalem more or less at their disposal. Here they met and prayed: sadly, no doubt; hoping, possibly, against hope; but, as we should have expected, and as the Gospel records actually represent them, bewildered, downcast, frightened, almost in despair.

The next forty days are passed over by the author of Acts in a single chapter. He says that Jesus appeared from time to time and gave many proofs that after His Passion He was still alive (Acts i, 3). According to this author, who is also the author of the third Gospel, these appearances took place in or near Jerusalem. St Mark, whose Gospel is the earliest we have, evidently thought of them as occurring in Galilee. That, at all events, is where the disciples are told to expect to see Jesus (Mk. xiv, 28, xvi, 7; cf. Lk. xxiv, 6). But the narrative as we have it ends abruptly, and no further account is given. The Gospel which bears the name of St Matthew follows St Mark's last chapters very closely, but adds little here except the statement that Jesus did actually appear to the disciples on the mountain where He had appointed and 'when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted' (Mt. xxviii, 17).

For our present purpose, however, it is not necessary to probe further into either of these two early traditions, the Lucan tradition of appearances in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, or the Marcan tradition of appearances in Galilee;[1] or even to examine the list of appearances given

[1] Cf. also Jn. xxi, 1–23.

by St Paul in 1 Cor. xv; which is, in fact, the earliest written record which has come down to us, and dates from about A.D. 55.

All such appearances are at the best difficult to visualize, and on any shewing they soon ceased. Nothing essential for our understanding of early Christianity depends upon our interpretation of the details contained in any of the accounts of them.

What the subsequent history shews to be far more important is the undeniable fact that the disciples became convinced, and especially from time to time as they met together, that Jesus Himself was present with them. Where two or three were gathered together in His name, there He was in the midst of them (Mt. xviii, 20): and particularly in the fellowship of the common meal, 'he was known of them in the breaking of the bread' (Lk. xxiv, 35).

It is worth while tracing carefully the use in the New Testament of this phrase 'the breaking of the bread'. The actual noun 'breaking' occurs only in the Lucan writings: once in Acts (ii, 42, 46)[1] and once in the Gospel (xxiv, 35). From this latter passage we gather that Jesus had a characteristic way of 'breaking the bread', i.e. of dividing and distributing[2] the flat loaves (leathery but very pleasant to eat, and still the staple article of food in such countries as Palestine and Egypt). This further suggests that meals

[1] The verb 'break' is found with 'the bread' in Acts xx, 7, 11: at Troas upon the first day of the week the disciples came together *to break bread* (*v.* 7): 'And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread' (*v.* 11).

[2] Cf. Lam. iv, 4.

together had been a special feature of the intercourse between Jesus and His disciples, a suggestion confirmed by the Gospel narratives of the feeding of large numbers at a time, where the expression 'break the bread' is again used[1] (Mk. vi, 41, viii, 6; Mt. xiv, 19, xv, 36; Lk. ix, 16). This is not at all surprising in view of the practice of a contemporary Jewish society which in some respects closely resembled the Christian, the society of Essenes. The Essenes are said to have numbered about 4000 in Palestine in the time of our Lord. They were essentially a monastic community (and in this respect as well as in some others clearly to be distinguished from the Christians). Their headquarters were situated at Engedi in the desert of Judæa, and they made their morning and evening meals religious ceremonies for which they prepared by careful ablutions and by clothing themselves in white.

Jesus, then, we may suppose, was in the habit of holding similar sacred meals with His disciples,[2] the last and most memorable of which took place on the evening before His

[1] Apart from the passages to which reference has already been made the expression 'break bread' is found in the New Testament only in Acts xxvii, 35: St Paul in the storm at sea urged the ship's company to eat and set them an example—'he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat'. Even here the phrase evidently connotes some formal and conspicuous action. It is worth while noting that our phrase 'break bread' for 'take food' is unknown to any ancient language. In Heb. it is only found of the act of breaking up a loaf for the purpose of distributing portions of it.

[2] It is very interesting to note that in some of the earliest of the paintings in the Christian catacombs at Rome our Lord is

Crucifixion. On this occasion when He broke the bread He said, 'This is my body'.[1]

The disciples, therefore, 'in breaking bread at home' (Acts ii, 46) were only continuing a practice to which they had become accustomed in the company of Jesus Himself. And from the first, that most recent occasion, the supper before His Death, with His strange and arresting words, can scarcely have failed to be in their minds; though how precisely it was referred to we do not know.

What is clear, however, is that from time to time when the disciples were assembled for the breaking of the bread and for prayer they found themselves moved by a spirit which they recognized to be the spirit of Jesus.[2] They felt their hearts burn within them as they used to do in the old days as they listened to His words: and they were overjoyed at the consciousness that He was with them still. How that could be they hardly at first stopped to ask. The theory of it came later when they had had time to reflect upon the experience.

represented as sitting at table with His disciples on the occasion apparently of the 'Last Supper', but the food provided consists of loaves and fishes, and the great baskets stand ready to receive the fragments.

[1] Mk. xiv, 22; Mt. xxvi, 26; Lk. xxii, 19 (even in the shorter 'Western' text, as that text now stands).

[2] Note that what struck St Luke about this rite was above all the fellowship associated with it (see below, p. 62). Note also the absence of any reference to the Cup. Does this mean that wine was not always provided, and that the breaking of the bread took place at the ordinary simple meals of poor people consisting of bread and a little relish with water only to drink?

Moreover they soon discovered that the experience was one which they could share with others, even with those who had never seen Jesus in the flesh.

For on the next great festival of the Jewish year, exactly fifty days after the day of the great tragedy, they felt themselves moved to take public action.

It was Pentecost, the festival which marked the conclusion of the grain harvest and was probably also associated with the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai. Jerusalem was thronged with crowds of pious Jews from the country and from abroad. What happened exactly it is difficult to make out. The disciples appear to have been carried away by a sudden strange impulse into the psychology of which we need not enter. It was perhaps the first occurrence of the phenomenon of *glossolalia* (speaking with tongues) described by Paul in 1 Cor. xiv.[1] According to the narrative of Acts the disciples rushed in a body into the street in such a state of exaltation and uttering such strange sounds that many of the bystanders thought them 'filled with new wine' (Acts ii, 13).

But what chiefly concerns us is the speech of St Peter for which the scene described in Acts ii is the setting. St Luke, though himself a later convert, seems to have got hold of at least the substance of the earliest Christian preaching; and that is what we must look for in St Peter's speech (Acts ii, 14–36).

St Peter begins by declaring that this strange 'prophesying' which the multitude had witnessed was nothing more or less than the fulfilment of a prediction of the prophet

[1] Note that nothing is said as to any 'breaking of the bread' in connexion with the gathering there described.

Joel (Acts ii, 16 ff.; Joel ii, 28 ff.), and was, in itself, an indication that these were 'the last' days, that is, the days associated with the coming of GOD's Kingdom.

The hope that the present order of things in which earthly force prevailed and GOD's people were under the heel of their oppressors would be brought to an end by GOD, whose sovereignty should thus at last be realized on earth, was widely and earnestly held among the Jews of the time. There was no official doctrine on the subject, and there were many variations upon the central theme. For most people, though not all, the hope centred in the expectation of a king chosen by GOD, the Messiah,[1] God's anointed. According to some—for example, the author of the seventeenth of the so-called Psalms of Solomon (in the latter half of the first century B.C.)—the Messiah would be a descendant of David, a victorious earthly ruler, gifted with miraculous powers and altogether righteous. Others, however, like the author of the Similitudes of Enoch, who wrote probably in Galilee in the first half of the first century B.C., expected a celestial Messiah who was even now with the Ancient of Days in heaven, waiting for the time appointed when He should come to judge the earth. His coming would be catastrophic and awe-inspiring. It would be a day of wrath for all the enemies of GOD and of GOD's people.

It was about this 'wrath to come' that John the Baptizer

[1] The actual word Messiah does not occur as a title in the Old Testament but merely as the passive participle of the verb 'to anoint' (e.g. Ps. ii, 2). The title is, however, found in such pre-Christian writings as the Psalms of Solomon and the Book of Enoch (mentioned above).

had preached. Not only the wicked heathen, he had said, needed to be afraid, but also the wicked Israelites, 'sons of Abraham' though they were: 'Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance' (Mt. iii, 7, 8; Lk. iii, 7, 8). The preaching of Jesus had begun with a similar call to repentance, although Jesus had made central in His teaching a phrase hardly found in the apocalyptic writings to which reference has been made, 'the Kingdom (i.e. the *sovereignty*) of God', and referred to His proclamation of its nearness as 'gospel', i.e. 'good news': 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel' (Mk. i, 15).

And now the first point St Peter makes in his speech on the day of Pentecost is, as we have already seen, that the strange prophesying of the disciples is evidence that the last days, i.e. the Messianic days, as foretold by Joel (Acts ii, 16–21), have actually arrived. 'We are all the more certain', St Peter goes on to say in effect, 'for we know who has been chosen king. It is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, "a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts ii, 22). You crucified Him (and even that was in accordance with God's plan), but He is still alive, as we can testify. God has raised Him from the dead, thereby fulfilling another otherwise unfulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament (Ps. xvi, 8–11) and making Him both lord and Messiah—this Jesus whom ye crucified.'

And when St Peter's audience 'were pricked in their heart', and asked 'men and brethren, what shall we do?'

the Apostle said to them, 'Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Messiah unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost' (Acts ii, 38).

'Repent and be baptized'—it might almost have been John the Baptizer preaching again. John's practice of baptizing had struck his contemporaries as something new.[1] Probably he meant it to be a symbolic action, like one of the symbolic actions so often performed by the Old Testament prophets. Very likely he had in mind Ezekiel's words, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean' (Ezek. xxxvi, 25), and accordingly baptized those who were convinced by his teaching as a sign that they on their part had genuinely repented and that GOD, on his part (as John felt he had prophetic authority to say), was accepting their repentance and was giving them cleansing.

But John went further. He foretold the coming of a Messiah who would baptize not merely with water but with Holy Spirit (Mk. i, 8).

And now the baptism advocated by St Peter is defined precisely as this baptism anticipated by John, the Messiah's baptism. As servants and representatives of the Messiah, the disciples baptize in His name. They were conscious that they had themselves received an endowment of Holy Spirit, and they felt constrained to act for their Master. Probably in the enthusiasm of the moment they hardly realized what a venture of faith it was. However that may be, there could be no doubt about the immediate

[1] Mk. xi, 30. Note that the question is not about *the teaching* but *the baptism* of John.

effect. Large numbers from that day on began to enter into fellowship with them and actually to share their own exhilarating indescribable experience, particularly 'in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers' (Acts ii, 42).

St Luke lays special stress upon the sense of fellowship which was from the first one of the leading characteristics of the Christian Society. The first chapters of Acts are dotted all over with phrases like 'with one accord' (ὁμοθυμαδόν, i, 14, iv, 24), 'together in one place' (ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ii, 1), 'together' (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ii, 44, 47). In their fellowship the Christians found the greatest delight (ii, 46, iv, 35), and a practical result of it, natural enough in the circumstances as we shall see later, was an entirely voluntary[1] communism. 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common' (Acts iv, 32).

[1] N.B. Acts v, 4.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

F. C. Burkitt. *Christian Beginnings*. (London University Press, 1924.)

E. Meyer. *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*. (Vol. III.) (J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1924.)

J. Weiss. *Das Urchristentum*. (Ed. R. Knopf.) (Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1917.)

Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. *The Beginnings of Christianity*. (Vol. I.) (Macmillan, 1920.)

W. L. Knox. *St Paul and the Church at Jerusalem*. (Cambridge University Press, 1925.)

G. F. Moore. *History of Religions*. (Vol. II.) (T. and T. Clark, 1920.)

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEOLOGY OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

THE first disciples were all Jews and did not cease to live as Jews when they became members of the Christian Society. They continued 'stedfastly with one accord in the temple' (Acts ii, 46): they were 'continually in the temple, blessing God' (Lk. xxiv, 53).

The people of Jerusalem were used to religious societies. We ourselves know of three, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, whom we have already mentioned. Probably the Christians seemed to their neighbours to be a new kind of Essene,[1] only more orthodox; and their obvious zeal and their remarkable cheerfulness and friendliness won them general favour (Acts ii, 47).

What distinguished the Jewish Christians from their fellow-countrymen was, above all, the belief that the expected king, Messiah, God's anointed, had already appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. And this belief they confidently proclaimed. Every day, in the Temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ (Acts v, 42) (i.e. the *anointed*, the word being simply the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Messiah*).

[1] The Essenes, among other peculiarities, rejected animal sacrifices and sent offerings of incense only to the Temple; and they were supposed to regard the sun with religious veneration.

For they felt responsible for the spread of the knowledge of the Messiahship of Jesus which had been committed to them (Acts x, 42).

Now it was comparatively easy to persuade people that Jesus was a prophet. That was exactly what the multitude thought Him to be when He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. 'Who is this?' all the city had asked; and the multitudes had replied, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee'[1] (Mt. xxi, 10, 11). And though the populace had apparently been subsequently persuaded by some of the prominent religious officials that Jesus was an impostor, they were not accustomed as a rule to place much confidence in such leadership and were quite capable of being brought, under a revulsion of feeling, to believe that His death had been due to malice and manipulation and that He really was a prophet after all.

But the Christians went further. They claimed not only that Jesus was *a* prophet but *the* prophet: *the* prophet of whom Moses had spoken—'A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me' (Deut. xviii, 15). Jesus had given evidence of the possession of the spirit of might by the mighty works and wonders and signs which GOD had done by Him (Acts ii, 22); and this spirit of might was an endowment prophesied by Isaiah (Is. xi, 1, 2) of 'the shoot out of the stock of Jesse' who should be the Messiah. But the crowning evidence was the Resurrection. 'This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses' (Acts ii, 32). From this signal act of GOD 'let all the house of Israel know assuredly,

[1] Cf. also Lk. xxiv, 19.

that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified' (Acts ii, 36; cf. xvii, 31).

Perhaps the disciples regarded the Resurrection as the actual coronation of the chosen king.[1] At any rate they had no hesitation in declaring that the king was Jesus. And this was the burden of their preaching: GOD had made Him Messiah and so given Him lordship.

The word lord (*κύριος*) has a wide range of meanings. The polite son in the parable (Mt. xxi, 30) said to his father, 'I go, sir'[2] (and went not). On the other hand the word is regularly used in the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to represent the sacred name of GOD which was held to be too holy to be pronounced. In the various religious associations which were springing up in the Roman Empire in the two or three centuries before and after the beginning of the Christian era, the title 'lord' was commonly applied by each association to its own particular deity, e.g. 'the lord Sarapis', or 'the lord Mithras'.[3] Thus it is not surprising that it became the usual title of Jesus among the Gentile Christians. It was natural to St Luke himself to use it so.[4] Some modern scholars have affirmed that the title was first introduced in Gentile circles at Antioch. Very likely its application to Jesus in this sense as the special object of the worship of

[1] Cf. Rom. i, 4, 'designated the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead'; cf. also Phil. ii, 9.

[2] Similarly the Greeks address Philip with respect (Jn. xii, 21), 'Sir, we would see Jesus'.

[3] So also in the worship of the Emperor, 'the lord Caesar'.

[4] E.g. Lk. vii, 13, x, 1.

the Christians may have begun there, but that Jesus was called 'lord' by Aramaic-speaking Christians is proved by the occurrence of the phrase *Marana tha* (1 Cor. xvi, 22; cf. *Didache*, x, 6). These letters can be divided in two ways: *Maran atha*, 'our Lord is coming' (or, 'will come');[1] or *Marana tha*, 'our Lord, come';[2] *Maran* and *Marana* being *Mara*, 'lord', with variant forms of the pronomial suffix *n*, *na*, 'our'.

Two difficulties would immediately arise in the minds of an intelligent Jewish audience whenever they heard Jesus preached as Messiah. First, if Jesus was really GOD's Messiah, why had He appeared only to disappear again? And secondly, if Jesus was really GOD's Messiah, why had He been permitted to die a criminal's death, and indeed a death specially associated in the Old Testament with GOD's curse? For Jesus had been 'hanged on a tree' (Acts v, 30, x, 39), and according to Deut. xxi, 23,[3] 'he that is hanged is accursed of God'.

To the first of these questions the disciples had a ready answer. The Messiah was already crowned in heaven, not yet upon earth, but at the time appointed He would reappear crowned upon earth. He would be crowned as judge; and in God's mercy an interval was provided that

[1] The form of the verb may be translated either by a present or by a future. [2] I.e. a precatory imperative.

[3] 'And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God.' The application of this passage to Jesus, suggested in Acts v, 30, x, 39, is worked out by St Paul in Gal. iii, 13.

men might have opportunity for repentance. 'Repent ye therefore', said St Peter in the temple to the crowd that gathered after the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, 'and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof GOD spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began' (Acts iii, 19–21). There seems to be a suggestion here that the sooner they repent the sooner GOD will send back to them His Messiah.

For a solution of the second difficulty the disciples turned to the Old Testament. They relied largely on the Old Testament for confirmation of their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, a belief itself based on His Resurrection from the dead. They felt their belief powerfully confirmed if they could shew that the various things prophesied in the Old Testament of the coming Messiah had actually found fulfilment in connexion with Jesus.

In the second speech recorded of St Peter he refers to the divine necessity that the Messiah should suffer, a necessity maintained by the mouth of GOD's prophets (iii, 18), but he offers no theory or explanation of this necessity. He speaks of the work of Jesus in a way which reminds us of the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen: Moses and the prophets having failed to bring the Jews to true repentance and amendment of life, 'unto you first God, having raised up his servant, sent him to bless you, in

turning away every one of you from your iniquities'[1] (iii, 26).

Our attention is caught by that word 'servant' (παῖς) (iii, 13, 26). In the Greek the word is ambiguous. It might be translated either 'child' or 'servant'.[2] Where precisely are to be found prophecies of the suffering of GOD's 'child' or 'servant'? The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah occurs at once to our minds. This is the very word used in the LXX for the Servant of the Lord in the 'Servant' songs of the prophet Isaiah. The application of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to our Lord is one of the most important steps in theology taken by the primitive Church. This passage of Scripture was not, so far as we know, applied to the Messiah by the Jews,[3] and its application to Jesus by the Christians may have been first developed by the Hellenists, the Jews who habitually spoke Greek and read the Old Testament in Greek. That the Messiah was sometimes, if not often, referred to as GOD's son, we have evidence, e.g. in Enoch cv, 2; 4 Ezra vii, 28, 29: and it is probable that passages of the Old Testament like Ps. ii, 7:[4] 'Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee', were already given a Messianic interpretation by the Jews; if for no other reason, because these passages attribute to the 'son' a world-wide dominion 'such as was not a historical

[1] Cf. v, 31.

[2] Cf. the French *garçon*.

[3] See H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Cross of the Servant*, pp. 51 ff. (Student Christian Movement.)

[4] Cf. Ps. lxxxix, 26, 27 and 2 Sam. vii, 14, where Solomon is spoken of as GOD's son. Cf. also Mt. xvi, 16, xxvi, 63.

reality in the time of the poet, or in any previous or subsequent time in history'.[1] Moreover, if there is one thing more certain than any other about the teaching of Jesus it is that He regularly and habitually spoke of GOD as 'Father'; and it may be that there was something about this constant, invariable practice of His which in the first instance led His disciples to infer that His consciousness of His sonship to God was clearer and stronger and closer than theirs—indeed different from theirs. Very soon therefore they came to feel that He was GOD's Son in a sense which did not apply to themselves.

GOD's Son: and the Greek-speaking Jews found this word 'son' in the 'Servant' songs of Isaiah.[2] It is therefore not improbable that some of the Jews from abroad who were present in such multitudes in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and were 'pricked in their heart' (Acts ii, 37) and became Christians, were the first to apply these passages of Isaiah to Jesus the Messiah.[3]

This identification of Jesus with the 'servant' of GOD

[1] Briggs, *Inter. Crit. Comm.* on Ps. li.

[2] The Hebrew word used in these songs is unambiguous and means 'servant' only. In Mk. i, 11 the saying connected with the baptism of Jesus, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased', combines a quotation from a Messianic psalm (Ps. ii, 7, *thou art my son*) with words from the first of the 'Servant' songs (Is. xlii, 1, *in whom my soul delighteth*).

[3] No doubt Jesus Himself was familiar with Is. liii and very likely referred to it in His teaching as shewing that GOD's servants were often called upon to suffer and that their suffering had redemptive value (cf. 4 Macc. vi, 28, 29; xvii, 21, 22); even if He did not apply the passage specifically to the Messiah or to Himself as Messiah.

spoken of by Isaiah was, as we have already observed, of the first importance; and that for two reasons. In the first place it enabled the Christians to give an answer to the question, 'Why should the Messiah have had to undergo such shameful suffering?' They could now reply with the prophet: 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors' (Is. liii, 4 ff.). In other words the Messiah's suffering was vicarious and redemptive. It was because of sin He suffered, sin not His own; and through His suffering sinners were rescued. Their sorrows were removed, they received healing, they were restored to peace.

And so, in St Peter's address to Cornelius and his friends, remission of sins, hitherto mentioned in connexion with the repentance (Acts ii, 38, v, 31) which is to be one of the fruits of the Messiah's influence, is directly associated with the name of Jesus and faith in Him: 'through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins' (x, 43).[1]

We have interpreted[2] 'baptism in[3] the name of the

[1] Cf. Acts iv, 12.

[2] Chapter I, p. 11.

[3] In Acts viii, 16 the preposition is 'into', but in Hellenistic Greek the distinction between the two prepositions is not to be pressed.

Messiah' as baptism authorized by the Messiah: but probably the expression also means something like 'into union with the Messiah', 'into the company of those whom the Messiah recognizes as his own'. It was one of the expectations connected with the Messiah that the people ruled over by Him should be free from sin.[1] Those who were marked out, sealed, as later writers put it, as His, were assured of salvation, i.e. security (Acts iv, 12) in the coming judgement when He should inaugurate the new era by executing judgement upon all mankind (x, 42 ff., xvii, 31).

In the second place the identification of Jesus with the servant of the Lord spoken of by Isaiah helped the Christians to realize that their mission as His representatives extended beyond the bounds of Judaism. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles...' (Is. xlii, 1). 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles' (*ibid.* xlii, 6). 'It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth' (*ibid.* xlix, 6). No doubt the disciples were slow in grasping the implications of such broad ideals, but already we have a hint that their thoughts had begun to turn in these directions in the word 'first' (Acts iii, 26)—'Unto you *first*

[1] E.g. Ps. Sol. xvii, 28–30, 41, 48, 49.

God, having raised up his servant, sent him to bless you'.[1]

But as the actual wording here is, no doubt, St Luke's, the point must not be pressed. And indeed the same caution must be exercised with regard to all the arguments which have been brought forward in so far as they depend upon the turn of a phrase.

But it may still have been worth while to venture into details as we have done in order to be in a position to estimate the general effect of the evidence as a whole. The 'scenes from early days' which St Luke gives, examined in this way, shew themselves at all events to be a consistent series. They give us an impression of the beginnings of Christian life and thought which, so far as we can judge, and so far as we are able to test it, is correct. They are not different from what we might, on general grounds, have expected; and they are not only consistent with the subsequent history but help to throw light upon it.

St Luke's account does, for example, help us to understand the teaching St Paul 'received' (1 Cor. xv, 3) when he became a Christian. To mention one point only: St Paul says that he was taught that 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures'—which is as we have seen, without further definition, precisely the doctrine expressed in the speeches of St Peter as recorded in Acts.

Up to this point, then, the Christians have been simply a Jewish sect, convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-expected Messiah, now crowned in heaven and soon to

[1] Cf. Acts iv, 12: 'Neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved'.

reappear on earth as Judge in the great assize which shall usher in the Kingdom of God and the new age.

They have come also to believe that the explanation of the Messiah's Death is to be sought along the lines of Is. liii, and that His suffering has had vicarious and redemptive efficacy: further, that those who by repenting and being baptized are united to the company which belongs to the Messiah and are called by His name receive remission of their sins and a special endowment of Holy Spirit.

But these beliefs are not as yet fully thought out or their further consequences realized. In particular various questions concerning the relation of the Christians to the Jewish Law on the one hand and to the Gentiles on the other have not yet been raised.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

In addition to the books mentioned at the end of the last chapter:

C. Anderson Scott. *The Fellowship of the Spirit.* (J. Clarke, 1921.)

W. Bousset. *Kyrios Christos.* (2nd ed.) (Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1921.)

CHAPTER THREE

OPPOSITION AND EXPANSION

OUR conclusion that in the first chapters of Acts St Luke is in touch with genuinely historical tradition is confirmed by the way in which he enables us to trace, on the one hand, the expansion of the Church and, on the other, the rise and growth of opposition.

At first, as we have seen, the disciples enjoyed the favour of the populace (Acts ii, 47) who found their zeal and cheerfulness attractive, and their peculiar opinions inoffensive. Moreover about some of them they recognized a kind of personal magnetism which was sometimes exercised with striking curative results (Acts iii, 1–10).[1] It is not surprising therefore that considerable numbers of men and women in Jerusalem actually became Christians (Acts ii, 41, iv, 4), and many others were inclined to join them.

The only section of the people which disapproved of the new movement from the very outset was a small one. It consisted chiefly of the highest officials of the Temple and their friends. Most, if not all, of them belonged to the Sadducean party. As Sadducees they were conservative in their religious views and disliked any kind of innovation. St Luke mentions their well-known disbelief in the resurrection of the dead as one of the causes of their antipathy to

[1] As to the powers of healing with which some of the Apostles were credited, see below, Chapter IX.

the teaching of the disciples (Acts iv, 2). But probably a more potent cause was their anxiety to preserve the peace. They were, in particular, responsible for order in the Temple precincts; and these crowds running together in Solomon's Porch alarmed them. They had Temple police and their own lock-up. So they seized the preacher who seemed to be the centre of disturbance and locked him up with his companion for the night (Acts iv). But they could do nothing really effective without the authorization of the Sanhedrin, the great council of seventy members which, though shorn of some of its powers, and entirely dependent, in the last resort, upon the good will of the Roman government, was still entrusted to a considerable extent with the actual administration of Judæa.

Next morning therefore the Temple authorities consulted some of the leading members of the Sanhedrin. Peter and John were examined, and made a spirited defence (iv, 13). The authorities were puzzled, and let the two Apostles off with a caution.

The Christians, however, were not to be intimidated, and they continued to preach in the Temple. As a matter of fact the Temple officials were in a weak position. They knew they were tolerated by the Romans only so long as they kept order. Their interference had been successful up to a point. Many now hesitated before becoming members of the new Society (v, 13). But the number of sympathizers with the movement was already so great that 'the captain of the temple' had to proceed with caution (v, 26). Rather by persuasion than by force (v, 26) he managed to bring Peter and some other Apostles—their

names are not given—before a more formal meeting of the Sanhedrin.

Here a new difficulty arose. For the Temple authorities had critics as well as supporters among the members of the council. They were, as we have already observed, Sadducees, and a strong and influential section of the council was composed of Pharisees, who, though upon occasion they would make common cause with the other party, were inclined, as a general rule, to be critical of their proposals. Recently they had seen reason to support the Sadducees in their application to the Romans for the infliction of the extreme penalty upon Jesus. But the case of the followers was not necessarily the same as that of their Master. It was possible, indeed, that He Himself had not been so dangerous a pretender as they had been led to suppose. At any rate His followers, though no doubt peculiar, seemed pious enough. And what mattered to the Pharisees more than anything else was piety.

So the Christians found unexpected defenders, and their punishment was mitigated into a beating. This they bore so pluckily that it did their cause good rather than harm. In fact the new Society prospered more than it had ever prospered—more than, in Jerusalem, it ever prospered again (Acts v, 40–42). 'The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests'—in spite of the higher command of the Temple—'were obedient to the faith' (vi, 7).

In the meantime all was not well within the Church. St Luke evidently admires the voluntary communism of

the earliest disciples, but he makes no attempt to hide the fact that it was difficult to organize and control. Some, like Ananias and Sapphira, were unwilling to submit to it though they were ashamed to allow their unwillingness to appear (v, 1–11). Others, certain Hellenists especially, complained that their friends were not getting their fair share in the daily distribution.

It is a striking testimony to the good spirit which animated the Society as a whole that the disciples were able to take effective steps to meet these difficulties. St Peter exercised a necessary, if severe, discipline: the multitude readily agreed to the suggestion of the Apostles that the management of business, the service 'of tables', should be entrusted to seven chosen men. From their names we should judge that all seven were Hellenists, i.e. Jews who spoke Greek rather than Hebrew. If so, it is a remarkable proof of the good feeling which had prevailed (Acts vi, 1–6).

Of these seven men one stood out above the others, not, so far as we know, in business ability, but in wisdom and power of thought and speech (vi, 10). This man, Stephen by name, was destined to open a new chapter in the history of the Church.

We know nothing about him beyond what St Luke tells us. What his opinions were we must gather, as best we can, from the charges his accusers made against him, and from the speech recorded of him in his own defence. St Luke evidently intends us to take this speech as representing the general position of the speaker.

It is easy to see that St Stephen is a Christian of a type

we have not hitherto met. His attitude to the Temple is different. His interpretation of the Old Testament is different. No doubt his accusers were right in thinking that his attitude to the Law was different too.

St Stephen's argument, as St Luke reports it, is never finished. Observing the growing hostility of his audience he breaks off into upbraiding and rebuke (vii, 51–53). But up to that point we can trace the thread of his discourse somewhat as follows: GOD has from the first in His good providence guided and watched over Israel His people. His presence has never been attached to any one place, nor can it be confined to any one shrine. His guidance and direction have been communicated to His people principally through the prophets, of whom Moses is the chief. But the people have again and again been rebellious and disobedient: and GOD has again and again given fresh instructions to meet the new situations created by His people's disobedience. Thus there is nothing necessarily permanent about the letter of the Law or the locality of the Temple. A new covenant accompanied by a new promulgation of law and the erection of a new sanctuary was made with Israel through Moses. The sanctuary was replaced in the time of David and Solomon. And now a great successor to Moses, a second Moses, has appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

And there the thread breaks. But we may with some probability continue the intended argument thus: a new covenant is, accordingly, now to be looked for, with corresponding changes in respect of sanctuary and law.

These are, certainly, 'liberal', 'advanced' opinions. How had Stephen acquired them? We have no evidence that he had learned anything of the kind from the Christians. They, so far as we know, held the view ordinarily held by Palestinian Jews as to the special character of the Temple and the permanence of the Law.

It seems probable that Stephen, before he became a Christian, belonged to the 'liberal' wing of Hellenistic Judaism. Philo refers in one of his writings[1] to 'persons who regard the traditional law as a symbol of spiritual life; the symbolic meaning they seek with every care, but despise the literal meaning'. Philo does not approve of such an attitude. Though the symbolic meaning of the Law was his own main interest, he was careful in practice to observe its regulations literally.[2] And one of our chief difficulties in tracking down these 'liberal' Hellenists arises from the fact that almost the only notices of them which have come down to us are found in the works of those who disapprove of them. Thus Josephus[3] mentions a Jewish merchant who advised the famous royal convert to Judaism, Izates King of Adiabene, to abstain from undergoing the actual rite of circumcision lest it should cause disaffection among his subjects. Josephus evidently does not approve of the advice, and records with obvious satisfaction the fact that the king refused to take it.

Recent research has made substantial additions to the evidence of the existence of a type of Judaism surprisingly

[1] *De Migratione Abrahami* (ed. Cohn and Wendland, II, 277).
[2] *De Migr. Abr.* 89.
[3] *Antiq.* XX, 2, 4.

influenced by Hellenism. There were Jews in Asia Minor 'who tolerated mixed marriages and dropped circumcision':[1] and there was a distinct tendency in certain quarters to identify Jehovah, God most high, with Zeus Hypsistos. A Jewish synagogue in Mysia apparently actually worshipped Zeus Hypsistos.[2] In Palestine itself we have the Essenes, already mentioned, many of whose ideas, whatever their origin, were strange to Judaism proper.

No doubt there were various degrees of such 'liberalism' to be found among the Hellenistic Jews of the Dispersion, and we cannot say which best represented Stephen's opinions. But it is highly probable that his position before he became a Christian is to be looked for somewhere in this direction. If so, to advocate such views in Jerusalem, whether as a Christian or not, would certainly have brought him into conflict, sooner or later, with the Pharisees. But Stephen was actually a Christian at the time when public attention was directed to his preaching. No doubt he had found his conversion a great stimulus to his thinking and saw that his own convictions were confirmed, and given new and remarkable possibilities of developement, in connexion with the teaching about Jesus. At any rate the Pharisees were now thoroughly aroused: and the Pharisees, more than any other party, had the ear of the people. So that, if the condemnation of Stephen was secured by a trial (more informal than formal) before a certain number of members of the Sanhedrin, the penalty

[1] W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, p. 179. (Arnold.)
[2] *Ibid.* p. 180.

was exacted by the mob. Stephen was rushed outside the city and stoned to death before the Roman authorities realized what was happening.

And as the mob quickly dispersed, and as it was only an obscure fanatic who had been murdered, the Roman governor probably let the matter drop and made no further inquiries.

But for the Christians it was the beginning of serious trouble. 'There arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles' (Acts viii, 1).

The Apostles perhaps felt it their duty to remain in the city. Possibly also it was realized that their opinions with regard to the Temple and the Law were not those of St Stephen. At any rate for the time they seem to have remained unmolested; and the persecution gradually died away (ix, 31). A few years later it broke out again, for the Christians never really regained the confidence of the non-Christian Jews. This time the persecution was directed especially against the leaders of the Church. Practically the whole of Palestine was now under the rule of Herod Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great. Herod Agrippa had a reputation for piety, a reputation which he valued and took pains to sustain. From the point of view of the strict Jew the Christians were now clearly involved in heresy. So 'Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also' (xii, 1–3). But Peter escaped,

and Herod died; and active persecution ceased again. There was little real religious force behind it.

One of the most prominent and conscientious of the persecutors, a young Pharisee named Saul, had himself suddenly become a Christian some time previously. The story of his conversion is too familiar to be told again here. St Luke regards it as so important that he finds occasion to repeat it no less than three times (ix, 1–19, xxii, 3–21, xxvi, 2–20). A striking modern parallel may be found in the conversion of the well-known Hindu mystic, the Sadhu Sundar Singh.[1] No doubt, as in the case of the Sadhu, sub-conscious influences had for some time been at work before the critical moment arrived. The very gallant end of Stephen, obviously a man of parts—and St Luke specially notes his charm of character (vi, 8)—could not have failed to impress the young rabbi.[2] None the less the crisis in his experience seemed to him to be sudden and overwhelming, and he retired into the Arabian desert[3] to think out his new position.

Meanwhile the dispersion of the disciples from Jerusalem had been the occasion of a forward movement on the part of the Church: 'they therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word' (viii, 4).

People who had become Christians while staying in Jerusalem had already taken the Gospel with them when

[1] B. H. Streeter and A. J. Appasamy, *The Sadhu*, pp. 5 ff. (Macmillan.)

[2] Cf. J. A. Hadfield, *Psychology and Morals*, p. 35. (Methuen.)

[3] I.e. probably the desert near Damascus. Cf. the three years spent by Josephus, as a young man, in the desert with the hermit Banus (Josephus, *Vit.* ii, 11).

they returned to their homes. Thus there had for some time been Christians in Damascus (ix, 2, 10). But now missionary work was more definitely undertaken. Philip the evangelist preached in Samaria and made many converts there (viii, 5–25). This was quite a new departure: for Samaritans were reckoned as at the most only half Jews.[1] But it had the approval (viii, 14) of the Apostles at Jerusalem, who sent a reinforcement in the persons of Peter and John to help to consolidate Philip's work. The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch was another step beyond the limits of Judaism proper.[2]

More important still was the baptism of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and his friends at Caesarea (Acts x).

St Luke relates the incident at length because he sees in it an anticipation of what was soon to become the settled policy of the Church. But St Peter had to defend his action before his brethren at Jerusalem, and it is clear that he regarded it as strictly exceptional. GOD had led him unmistakeably step by step: at no point could he have drawn back. 'Who was I, that I could withstand GOD?' (xi, 17). But St Peter's language seems to suggest that he would not take a similar step again without similarly decisive guidance. It was not St Peter who became the Apostle of the Gentiles.

On the other hand St Luke calls attention to the way in which the Christians as a whole overcame their prejudices.

[1] According to a saying of the rabbis (*Nidda*, iv, 2) 'the Sadducees when they keep the customs of their fathers are equal to the Samaritans'.

[2] See Deut. xxiii, 1; but cf. Wisd. iii, 14.

We cannot but feel, as St Luke himself evidently felt, that the temper they displayed did them the greatest credit and augured well for the future. 'When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life' (xi, 18).

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

In addition to the books already mentioned:

F. J. A. Hort. *The Christian Ecclesia.* (Macmillan, 1897.)

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL CONDITIONS IN THE GENTILE WORLD

Now that we have reached the point when Christianity is about to spread over the Roman Empire we had better attempt a brief survey of the social and religious conditions of that great Empire.

The Roman world as a whole was still conscious of gratitude to Augustus for the era of peace which he had won for it after a long period of internal and external strife. It now enjoyed reasonably good government throughout its vast provinces. These were all securely linked to the capital city and a traveller could journey thither more easily than at any later time down to the introduction of steam. An inscription tells us that a certain merchant of Hierapolis in Phrygia sailed round Cape Malea to Italy no less than seventy-two times, a passage which was regarded as one of the most dangerous in the Mediterranean. Ships were of a considerable size. Josephus says that there were six hundred people on board the ship which took him to Italy. Sailors were of course very dependent on the weather. A voyage from Puteoli to Alexandria might take anything from seven or eight days to fifty. Four to six knots was considered a fair average rate of sail.

On land the main roads were good. We can still walk on the Appian Way, paved with hewn blocks of stone fitted together without cement, and broad enough for two

carriages to pass abreast. An ordinary day's journey would be from thirty to fifty miles. Julius Cæsar is recorded to have travelled a hundred miles one day in a hired carriage.

The Empire was dotted over with large and prosperous cities. The population of Rome itself was not less than a million. Juvenal complains of the narrowness of the streets, the height of the houses, the expensiveness of lodgings, and the noise of the traffic—especially at night. 'None but the wealthy can get to sleep in Rome.'

In the towns as well as on the great estates in the country a considerable part of the population were slaves. Men had long been alarmed at their enormous numbers; and the alarm increased as time went on.

All manufacturers on a large scale depended on slave labour. Some slaves were highly trained in technical arts; some were employed as secretaries and in positions of responsibility and were well educated. Most slaves were on the whole treated humanely, if for no other reason, because it paid their master to treat them so. Many masters in their wills manumitted one or more of their slaves; many others allowed their slaves to save up honorariums and at length to use their savings to purchase freedom.

The freedmen formed a well-recognized class in society. They were much employed at court; they supplied most of the medical practitioners; and some of them acquired great wealth.

A certain amount of general culture was widely diffused, and that culture was Hellenistic. Greek was the lingua franca of all those parts of the Empire with which we are

concerned; and over them all lay a thin layer of Greek ideas and customs, Greek science, Greek art, and Greek philosophy. The Greek was not the Greek of the classical period either in language or thought, not pure Greek, but Greek diluted with other elements and influences, Persian, Egyptian, and what not.

Schooling, for those who were to receive systematic education at all, began at six or seven years of age with reading, writing and arithmetic. About twelve a boy passed into the school of the 'grammaticus' (i.e. *the teacher of literature*), where he stayed till he was about sixteen. Here he learned a little more Mathematics, a certain amount of such subjects as Geography and Music, but chiefly to recite set pieces, above all pieces from Homer. At the same time he was given plenty of exercise in drill and games and athletics.

For higher studies he went on again to some academy. If he were not going to be a specialist (a medical man for example) he would put himself under some teacher of reputation, or would go to some famous centre of learning such as Athens or Alexandria or Rhodes and take up Philosophy or Rhetoric. The latter was esteemed the most practically useful of all the more advanced studies, and the best rhetoricians like Quintillian had a lofty ideal of their profession. An orator, in Marcus Cato's definition, was *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, 'a good man who could express himself well'.

Philosophy was another favourite subject of study. It included, besides Metaphysics proper, Ethics and Psychology and what we now call Natural 'Science' (although

the term Natural 'Philosophy' is only just disappearing from use).

At a great University various types of philosophy were taught by various schools of professors and lecturers. At Athens, for example, there seem to have been four main schools: the Platonic at the Academy with a tendency to scepticism; the Aristotelian at the Lyceum largely occupied with specialized and practical studies (Botany, Geography, Psychology and the like); and the Epicurean and the Stoic schools, more recent in their developement and mentioned by St Luke (Acts xvii, 18). These last seem to have been more influential at this period than the others, the Stoic above all.

The main purpose of Epicurus himself (341–270 B.C.) was to deliver men from fear, especially fear of the gods and of life after death. His teaching is summed up in four Greek lines discovered at Herculaneum:

> There is nothing to fear in God:
> There is nothing to feel in Death:
> What is good is easily procured;
> What is ill is easily endured.[1]

The greatest of all the exponents of the Epicurean philosophy was the poet Lucretius, whose splendid poem dates from about 57 B.C. But though Epicurus himself advocated plain living and high thinking, his doctrines were used by some of his followers and successors in defence of voluptuousness and luxury; and as the pursuit of pleasure exhibited itself in the grossest and most revolting forms in

[1] C. F. Angus, in *Camb. Anc. Hist.* VII, 234.

the streets of the Hellenistic city, it is not surprising that healthy and clean-minded people reacted from a philosophy which laid itself open to such abuse; and the direction in which the reaction took place was commonly towards Stoicism.

The founder of Stoicism was a contemporary of Epicurus, Zeno of Cyprus (340–265 B.C.); but the original doctrines of the school had undergone considerable modification, as its members had shewn themselves willing and able to learn from other schools of thought, and, moreover, had all along kept in touch with the developement of Natural Philosophy, or, as we should say, Natural Science. Poseidonius of Rhodes, the great Stoic teacher who flourished about the beginning of the first century B.C., was a man of extensive and varied attainments in most departments of knowledge; and his encyclopedic works, fragments only of which have survived, were a veritable storehouse for writers like Cicero, Philo of Alexandria, Pliny, and Plutarch.

By the first century A.D., through the influence of comprehensive and eclectic teachers like Poseidonius, a considerable body of ideas had come to be held in common by the general educated public in all the countries bordering on the Eastern half of the Roman Empire. The later books of the Old Testament, and the books of what we call the Apocrypha, especially Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, and the Book of Wisdom (generally known as 'the Wisdom literature'), seem to shew the influence of this common stock of philosophical and scientific ideas. The staple element in the whole seems to be Stoicism, but it is

a Stoicism modified by Platonism and Aristotelianism, and by other streams of thought.

If we are to understand the mental equipment of the early converts to Christianity from among the Gentiles, and even that of the Christian missionaries themselves and particularly that of the greatest of them, St Paul, we must briefly survey this conglomeration of contemporary ideas as it touches the subjects with which the Christian preaching was concerned.

Of all its various items probably the most important for our present study are those connected with πνεῦμα—spirit.

The Hebrew word for spirit is used in the earliest portions of the Old Testament most frequently either (1) of wind (literally e.g. the North wind, or figuratively) or (2) of the spirit of GOD giving men some unusual power, e.g. as prophets.

The notion underlying the word seems to be that of an invisible wind-like substance in motion. The word is used of that in man which is the subject of emotion, of thought, and, more rarely, of volition. This, the highest element in man, is conceived of as like in substance to 'spirit' in GOD. So the author of Ecclesiastes thus describes the death of human beings: 'Then shall the dust return to dust as it was, and the spirit shall return to GOD who gave it' (Eccles. xii, 7). Here already we may, with all probability, see Hellenistic influence. For, according to the Stoics, there was immanent in all the world a fiery air-like substance which was itself rational. All men had within themselves a particle of this substance, this immanent Reason,

which alone was GOD. GOD is spirit, as Poseidonius explicitly says. Men therefore are essentially related to GOD, because reason in man is composed of the very same substance as that of which GOD's being consists.

This idea of a kind of divine fluid is found from very ancient times in Egypt[1] and probably existed elsewhere. In the minds of the later Stoics, under the influence of Platonism, the idea was gradually becoming less and less materialistic; and their conception of spirit (*πνεῦμα*) was tending towards a conception which on the one hand vaguely resembled the modern conception of 'energy', and on the other that of 'the immaterial'. The common possession of 'spirit' linked all mankind in one great family. Men are 'fragments of God', expressions of the Reason which appears also in the order of nature. It is their duty to exercise the will to live in conformity with nature. 'All of us', says Seneca, 'have the same origin, the same source: no man is nobler than another save him who has a more upright character and one better fitted to honourable pursuits.'[2] This 'cosmopolitan idea' was by no means confined to Stoicism. We find it for example in Menander (c. 300 B.C.), the most famous of the poets of the New Comedy:

> No honest man I call
> A foreigner; one nature have we all.[3]

Over against spirit, and in sharp contrast to it, the later

[1] Note especially the Egyptian conception of the *Ka*, a kind of personal fluid filling a man and flowing to his very extremities.

[2] *De Ben.* iii, 28.

[3] (Frag. 602), C. F. Angus, *op. cit.* p. 225.

Stoics (again partly under Platonic influence) placed the flesh. Σῶμα σῆμα, the phrase ran, *the body is a tomb*. 'A corruptible body weigheth down the soul' (Wisdom ix, 15). The body must be subdued: Reason must control all the irrational parts of human beings. The Stoics carried the subjugation of the body to the point of asceticism. Not only fear and pleasure but pity and love are forbidden to the Sage. But we must remember that it is to them that we owe the use of the word Conscience (συνείδησις) in a moral sense, with very nearly the meaning we still give it. Nothing is to be set in the scale against Virtue. A good man will not deviate from the path of duty whatever Fate has in store for him.

Belief in Fate was widespread and Fate was connected with the stars. Astrologers were commonly believed to be able to read men's destiny written in the aspect of the heavens at the time of their birth. What Suetonius says about Tiberius[1] would probably apply to very many others: 'Although somewhat neglectful of the gods and of religious matters, being addicted to astrology and firmly convinced that everything was in the hands of fate, he was nevertheless immoderately afraid of thunder. Whenever the sky was lowering he always wore a laurel wreath, because that kind of leaf is said not to be blasted by lightning'.

Such 'loss of nerve' was common. It shewed itself also in the almost universal belief in magic. The earliest papyrus yet discovered is a papyrus full of magical formulae. Many such papyri have been found. Certain places like Thessaly

[1] *Tiberius*, lxix.

and Ephesus (Acts xix, 19) were famous for witchcraft and sorcery.

One other popular belief must be mentioned, the belief in demons. Books like the book of Enoch (first century B.C.) explain how demons throng the air, haunt certain places like waterless deserts, and in certain circumstances attack men.

All these and many other beliefs found advocates in various quacks and vagrants and street-corner preachers. The less educated masses listened to their babble until their minds were reduced to a state of uneasiness and confusion.

Of Religion four main types may be distinguished. There were, first, the old long-established cults: the Olympian deities with their temples well endowed and beautifully situated and appointed; often containing works of art, like the Zeus of the sculptor Pheidias at Olympia, the Cnidian Aphrodite, the Hermes of Praxiteles, unsurpassed to this day: also, worthy of special mention as of great practical value, the cult of Aesculapius, the healer, whose temples served as health-resorts or even as hospitals, and whose priests interwove in their religious teaching a great deal of sound hygiene and practised what would today be called 'suggestion' to the great benefit of many sufferers. And besides the classical Greek gods and goddesses almost every locality had its tutelary divinity or at least its hero or demi-god.

There was indeed a tendency to identify the local deity with Zeus or Hermes or one of the other well-known deities of classical Greek literature. Moreover the more

educated were inclined to believe in divinity-in-general rather than in deities-in-particular and to think of one divine being manifesting itself in various forms. They were generally ready therefore to take part in more than one form of worship. No doubt most people had preferences and there were many forms to choose from: from the stately and decorous worship of Athena or Apollo to the wild orgies in honour of Dionysus or Cybele.

The second kind of religion to which reference must be made was actually a recent introduction, though in principle it was old enough: the worship of the Emperor.

The Greek dynasties which had reigned over the great kingdoms into which Alexander's empire had been divided, the Ptolemies, for example, at Alexandria, and the Seleucids at Antioch on the Orontes, had regularly received divine honours and the title θεός had often appeared on their coins. But it was not till 29 B.C. that Rome followed their example. In that year Augustus gave permission for a temple in honour of himself and the genius of the Roman people to be set up at Pergamum. Similar temples were soon to be found in every province of the Empire. Deputies from the various cities of each province were formed into 'concilia' for the due performance and maintenance of the new worship. These 'concilia' met annually, and their meeting was made a great social function and celebrated with public ceremonies and above all with the Games.

This developement was, after all, more reasonable than might appear on the surface. To the ordinary provincial the Emperor was a mighty power far removed but capable of making himself felt, for good or ill, immediately and

decisively anywhere in the civilized world. It was not difficult to believe that something divine must reside in such a potentate.[1] Politicians and statesmen of course encouraged the belief and tried to use it as a means of welding the Empire into a common loyalty. As a religion, however, it did not go very far towards satisfying the deeper needs and aspirations of mankind.

These more intimate religious feelings were better provided for in what are commonly called 'the mystery religions'.

Voluntary religious associations, 'thiasoi'—cult-brotherhoods—formed for the private worship of some special deity, had sprung up and were still springing up all over the Eastern half of the Empire. A little later the movement became stronger still, and the second century of our era witnessed a veritable revival of religion throughout the Empire.

These cults varied a great deal in detail from the venerable and dignified mysteries at Eleusis to the strange orgies in honour of Attis. But the fundamental conceptions underlying them were essentially the same. After a period of preparation and ritual purification the initiated was admitted to a part in a sacred drama representing the mythical experiences of the cult-deity. The central deities

[1] Specially remarkable is the language of an inscription (11 or 9 B.C.) at Priene in honour of the birthday of Augustus (23 Sept.): 'The birthday of the God is become the beginning of glad tidings through him to the world...the Saviour of the whole human race...God of God...Zeus of father Zeus' (H. von Gaertringen, *Inschriften von Priene* (1906), p. 80, No. 105).

of all the more important of these cults were deities who had died and revived again. In a sacred drama the adventures of the god were re-enacted by his worshippers who thereby felt themselves entering into the divine experience and became conscious of intimate spiritual relationship with their god. This they took to be a promise and a foretaste of a blessed immortality. Aristotle understood the psychology of these rites very well.

'It is not', he says, 'that the initiated learn anything, but they feel certain emotions and are put into a certain state of mind.'[1]

In some cases the experience might best be described as one of mystical communion with the deity: in others, however, the initiated professed to have the sense of a still closer union of mystical self-identification with the divinity. Thus in some rite connected with the great Egyptian god Osiris, the worshipper at a certain point in the ceremony was apparently taught to exclaim, 'I am Osiris'.

If pressed to describe the *modus operandi* of such experiences the 'mystagogos' would probably have had resort to some such conception of spirit as that which has already been mentioned. The union with the deity was effected through the reception of or contact with some of that divine spirit of which the being of the deity consisted.

How far 'the mysteries' exercised an elevating influence on the character of those who were initiated into them is a matter of dispute. No doubt the more reputable of them

[1] Synesius, *de Dione*, 10.

were to some extent morally uplifting.[1] Porphyry quotes an inscription from Epidaurus: 'You must be pure when you go within the incense laden temple, and purity lies in thinking holy thoughts'.[2]

The fourth kind of religion to be met with at this period in the Empire is, from our point of view, of the highest importance: Judaism. Jewish communities, great or little, were found gathered around some synagogue or 'place of prayer' (Acts xvi, 13) in most of the cities situated on the great trade routes and in many others as well. But we must defer our study of the Jewish 'Dispersion' (as it is called) to a later chapter.

[1] See Aristophanes, *The Frogs*, 455; Cicero, *de legibus*, II, 14; Diodorus, V, 49; Origen, *Cels.* III, 59, etc. On the other hand see Diog. Laert. VI, 2 (§ 39). Diogenes complains that many bad characters were admitted. At Eleusis homicides and notorious criminals were excluded, otherwise there was, so far as is known, no moral test.

[2] Quoted by A. D. Nock in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, p. 71.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

E. R. Bevan. *Stoics and Sceptics.* (Oxford University Press, 1913.) 'Environment...of Israel from Maccabees to our Lord', in S.P.C.K. *New Commentary*, 1928.

W. K. Lowther Clarke. *The Gentile Background of Early Christianity. Ibid.*

C. H. Moore. 'Life in the Roman Empire', in *The Beginnings of Christianity* (Foakes Jackson and Lake). Vol. I. (Macmillan.)

P. Wendland. *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur.* (2nd and 3rd edd.) (J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1912.)

T. R. Glover. *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire.* (Methuen, 1909.)

W. S. Ferguson. In *Cambridge Ancient History*, VII, 1.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MAIN POINTS IN THE TEACHING OF ST PAUL

(1) Union with Christ and its Results

One of the most decisive moments in the entire history of Christianity is the conversion of St Paul, the greatest of all Christian missionaries and the first Christian theologian. If we are to understand the growth and developement of the Christian religion it is of the first importance that we should grasp at least the main points of the great Apostle's teaching.

Immediately after his conversion, as we have already seen, came a period of retirement in Arabia. There can be little doubt that then and there St Paul worked out the main lines of his doctrinal position.

We must of course remember that St Paul's epistles are by no means systematic treatises. The points on which the Apostle lays most emphasis in any particular epistle are not necessarily those which he regards as the most important in Christian doctrine taken as a whole, but those which he feels the particular readers whom he has in mind at the moment need to have emphasized. Nevertheless by reading and re-reading such of his correspondence as remains, and paying careful attention to its background, we can reconstruct, with a considerable degree of certainty, the broad outlines of the system of thought upon which St Paul's theological position is built.

St Paul was a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia. He came of a well-to-do family, and was educated as a Pharisee. He was evidently intended to become a rabbi, and St Luke tells us that the later stages of his education took place at Jerusalem under the famous rabbi Gamaliel. St Paul himself more than once lays stress on the strictness of his upbringing as an orthodox Jew. But it is worth notice that Gamaliel belonged to the school of Hillel, the more liberal of the two famous rabbinic schools. According to early testimony, Hillel went so far as to encourage his disciples to read Greek literature.[1] Moreover, as we have already seen, St Luke brings St Paul's conversion into close connexion with the death of Stephen the Hellenist. And further, St Paul spent at least part of his boyhood in a University city which was one of the centres in Asia Minor of the philosophy of the Stoics. Strabo tells us that what made the University of Tarsus chiefly remarkable was the interest taken in its studies by the citizens themselves. In such circumstances no intelligent man, keen and loyal though he might be as a Jew, could fail to be influenced by the general thought of his time. Philo, the learned Jew of Alexandria, a contemporary of Christ, is a case in point. There can be no doubt that he was profoundly influenced by the body of Hellenistic thought to which reference was made in the last chapter. In fact his works largely consist of attempts to read Hellenistic psychology and ethics into the Old Testament. Of course Philo could only do this by making the Old Testament narratives into elaborate

[1] The other school, the school of Shammai, discouraged the study of Greek.

allegories. But though this allegorizing of the Scriptures is Philo's main interest he still (as has already been observed) accepts the Mosaic Law in its literal sense and remains a loyal and orthodox Jew.

St Paul, we must remember, lived under similar conditions and must almost certainly have come under similar influences. We find him, for example, occasionally working out an allegory like one of Philo's; his use of the word 'conscience' is exactly the Stoic use; his conception of the flesh is not unlike that which was described in the last chapter; and so on.

We must therefore be on the look out both for Jewish and also for Hellenistic elements in the Apostle's theology. What do we actually find? The experience on the road to Damascus which brought St Paul finally into the Church presented itself to him as a revelation of the Messiah, and the Messiah as 'Son of God'. In St Paul's own words 'it was the good pleasure of God...to reveal his Son in me' (Gal. i, 15, 16).

Perhaps it is safest, as Lightfoot thought, to take the preposition as instrumental—through me, using me as the instrument, my circumstances and condition as the occasion of the revelation.[1] At all events the episode on the Damascus road constituted the beginning of that revelation of the 'Son of God'; and as a matter of fact St Paul lays great stress upon his actual experience of 'sight'. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, for instance, he makes it one of the grounds of his claim to apostleship. 'Am I not

[1] Cf. Gal. i, 24, 'they glorified God in me', i.e. my conversion was to them an occasion for glorifying God.

an apostle?' he asks; 'have I not seen Jesus our Lord?' (1 Cor. ix, 1). In view of the emphasis St Paul lays on this vision it is improbable that he had ever actually seen Christ in the flesh. At the same time it is inconceivable that he was ignorant of or uninterested in the traditions about Christ's teaching and personality which must have been still vivid and living in Christian circles.

St Paul's own references to Christ's earthly life are indeed few but they are of great significance. He appeals to his readers by the gentleness and considerateness of Christ (2 Cor. x, 1). He speaks of Christ's tender mercies (Phil. i, 8): 'Christ also', he says, 'pleased not himself' (Rom. xv, 3); and, in another well-known passage, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal. vi, 2). Christ was his ideal of what human life should be; He 'knew no sin' (2 Cor. v, 21), yet 'he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross' (Phil. ii, 8). 'Wherefore also', St Paul adds, 'God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'.

'Lord', 'the Son of God'—so, no doubt, St Paul had heard the Christians speak of Him: and clearly they were thinking of no mere descendant of David, but a Messiah of the celestial type described in the book of Enoch. The Synoptic Gospels themselves shew decisively that the early Church in general conceived of the Messiahship of Jesus as being of this type. The application of the title 'Son of

man' to Jesus in such contexts as that of Mk. xiv, 62, 'Ye shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven', is in itself sufficient evidence of this. The actual title 'Son of man' never occurs in St Paul's writings. Jesus is to him above all 'the Son of God': not a mythical hero, but a historical person who only a very few years before had been crucified and had risen from the dead. St Paul, at some time or other, made careful inquiries about the last point; and might have carried them further had he not had the wonderful experience of seeing the Lord Himself. That personal experience was to him a striking verification of what the Christians averred about Jesus, viz. that He was now 'in the heavenlies'.[1] If so, the divine spirit of Jesus was liberated and capable of entering into men on earth.

For St Paul a Christian is a person who has the spirit of Christ—'if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his' (Rom. viii, 9).

Spiritual union with Christ is, according to St Paul's teaching, the fundamental secret of the Christian life: 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col. i, 27). 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit' (1 Cor. vi, 17).

The expression 'in Christ' is found in St Paul's epistles[2] 155 times and only 41 times in the whole of the rest of the New Testament. It is used by him to denote the union between Christ and the Christian, and it suggests a union of the most intimate conceivable kind. It is a union effected by the power of GOD when a man has faith in Christ. This

[1] Eph. i, 3.

[2] Not counting the Pastorals.

faith is nothing less than the response and surrender of a man's whole being to the love of Christ. 'I live,' says St Paul, 'and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me' (Gal. ii, 20).

The Christian is conscious of this union with Christ in changed thought and purpose and desire. He finds himself thinking and planning and desiring according to the mind of Christ, as Christ thought and planned and desired. But, indeed, the union goes down into the profound depths of his being far below the limits of consciousness. There is something mystical in it, and it makes a man a new creature: 'if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new' (2 Cor. v, 17).

This, then, is the fundamental conception in St Paul's theology. Let us see how he applies it to the question of the Christian's status before God and to the general question of Christian conduct.

In thinking of a man's status before God St Paul starts as a Jew and a Pharisee with a deep sense of the grave importance of the matter. God is both the Lawgiver and the Judge of the Universe. St Paul pictures all men as standing in God's court. How may they secure a sentence of acquittal? That is the great and solemn question he asks.

Not, at all events, by punctilious observance of God's Law. However hard a man tries he will certainly fail to observe God's Law in its entirety (Rom. vii, 14–24). How then? The answer St Paul gives is that to be acquitted in

GOD's court a man must take his stand there ἐν Χριστῷ, *in Christ*.

Standing thus 'in Christ' he is no longer the same person. Indeed, as far as the court is concerned, he is not the same person at all. The old person about to be condemned by the Judge has disappeared. He is dead. In his place there stands a new person altogether, new in Christ Jesus. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. viii, 1). The Judge accordingly pronounces a sentence of acquittal: the man, to use the technical theological term, is 'justified'. But he is not justified by a mere legal fiction. The Spirit of Christ already pervades his being. His 'sanctification'—to use another technical term—the process by which he is made holy, has actually begun.

The acquittal in GOD's court of the prisoner thus united with Christ is certain; but it clearly involves 'the passing over of sins done aforetime' (Rom. iii, 25). When a man sins he inflicts loss and damage not only upon himself but also upon the world so far as it lies within the orbit of his life and influence. How is the harm done to be made good? Not to repair it, merely to ignore it, would be unworthy of GOD as the Supreme Governor of the Universe.

Here the picture of the law court fades from St Paul's mind and its place is taken by two others. The first is a picture of the animal sacrifices still going on in the Temple at Jerusalem. Thoughtful men had, from time to time, questioned the value of the 'blood of bulls and goats' shed in this way (Ps. l). A few like the Essenes had ceased to offer such sacrifices; but the sacrificial system was clearly

arranged for in GOD's Law and most people were content to accept it as a mystery beyond their comprehension.

The second picture which rises before St Paul's mind is that of Christ upon the Cross. Why had it been necessary for the Divine Messiah to suffer such a death? St Paul is shocked at the manner of it (Gal. iii, 13).

But now the two pictures are seen together and they seem to throw light on one another—the mysterious requirement of sacrifice and the mysterious necessity for the death of the Messiah. The idea of sacrifice, which as Ruskin says 'has been manifested as one united and solemn instinct by all thoughtful and affectionate races since the world became peopled', is an attempt to express the truth that the effects of sin are repaired through the suffering, not only of the sinner, but of others on his behalf. It is through the vicarious suffering of GOD's servants who offer their lives in service, that reaches to the point of sacrifice and may involve death itself, that the harm done by sin is made good.

In some sense it must be true to say that in the suffering of His servants GOD Himself suffers. GOD's servants have been enduring sufferings on behalf of others since mankind came into being; and in all their affliction GOD Himself has been afflicted (cf. Is. lxiii, 9).

This redemptive suffering still goes on. St Paul speaks of himself as having a share in it—filling up on his part 'that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ' (Col. i, 24). But it is in the supreme sacrifice of Christ Himself, who is in a unique sense GOD's Son and the Divine Messiah, that GOD's redemptive work is exhibited in its highest

expression and in its profoundest and most far-reaching significance and effect. 'Him who knew not sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him' (2 Cor. v, 21). St Paul had made his own the Christian teaching he had received: 'how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures' (1 Cor. xv, 3).

We must go on now to consider the application of the fundamental principle of union with Christ to the question of Christian conduct. 'We cannot be saved as we are', said a great English philosopher, recently dead. 'We can only be saved by giving ourselves to something in which we remain what we are, and yet enter into something new'.[1] This comes very near to the thought of St Paul. 'We are saved', St Paul would say, 'by giving ourselves in entire devotion to the service and love of Christ.' A man so in Christ 'a new creature' is no longer 'under law', he says, 'but under grace' (Rom. vi, 14).

The controlling force of his life is now no longer from without but from within. It is a force not less but more effective than the external compulsion of Law. 'Faith without works' would have seemed to St Paul a silly phrase.[2] Luther rightly interprets the Apostle's thought when he says, 'Faith asks not whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is always doing them'.[3] 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one

[1] Quoted in *The Times*, March 28th, 1929.
[2] Dr Sydney Cave, *The Gospel of St Paul*, p. 156.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 193.

died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again' (2 Cor. v, 14, 15). The Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of God, dwelling in a man (or again, to use what is, for St Paul, an equivalent expression, Christ dwelling in a man) impels him to right action and brings forth naturally and spontaneously the fruits of good living.

Here, according to the Apostle, is the whole secret of the good and beautiful life. In the chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to which we have already referred (vii) the Apostle gives a vivid picture of the working of what M. Coué called 'the law of reversed effort'. The very fact that a certain action is commanded and a conscientious man says to himself, 'I must do this', arouses in him the desire not to do it.

Instead of the formula, 'I must do this', St Paul recommends the formula: 'I am Christ's: I want to do this; and by the grace of God I can'.

Modern Psychology, at all events, is on the side of St Paul.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

W. R. Inge. Essay on 'St Paul' in *Outspoken Essays*. Vol. I. (Longmans, 1919.)

C. Anderson Scott. *Christianity according to St Paul*. (Cambridge University Press, 1927.)

CHAPTER SIX

THE MAIN POINTS IN THE TEACHING OF ST PAUL

(2) Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We might have expected that St Paul in the violence of his reaction from the ordinances of Judaism and in the enthusiasm of his discovery of the principle of Faith —Faith as opposed to 'works of Law'—would have had nothing to do with rites of any kind. But there were two rites already entrenched in Christian tradition and practice, and, far from rejecting them, St Paul readily accepted them, and tried to make them count for more in the spiritual experience of his converts. These two rites are, of course, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Perhaps one of the best ways in which to approach the Apostle's teaching with regard to both these rites is to begin by considering the meaning which is to be attached to a word which he uses in connexion with the former, the word *homoioma* (ὁμοίωμα). In Baptism, he says, we become united with Christ 'by the *likeness* (*homoioma*) of his death' (Rom. vi, 5).

St Paul is picturing the new convert totally immersed in the water of some river. For a moment he has disappeared, he is dead and buried, as Christ died and was buried. Then, as in the case of Christ, there is a resurrection. A new creature emerges to live a new life as a Christian. The process is enacted symbolically but the

result is real. The ancients took symbols, as they also took names and idols and imitative actions, more seriously than we commonly do. The symbolic action of baptism is to St Paul no mere, bare symbol, but an 'effectual sign' of grace,[1] a symbol producing some actual effect associated with the thing symbolized. Plato uses this word *homoioma* of finite things as the *likenesses* in which 'the ideas' (in his doctrine, the eternal unseen realities) are expressed.

So much by way of introduction: it is time now to pass on to details.

Baptism

(Rom. vi, 1–11 and cf. Col. ii, 12; also
1 Cor. xii, 13 and 1 Cor. x, 1–4)

To understand the importance which St Paul attaches to Baptism we must picture the rite performed not upon the baby of Christian parents but upon a convert coming into the Church from the pagan world. It is then obviously no bare symbol but a solemn expression of faith.

St Paul would not indeed have supposed that without faith Baptism 'could work any spiritual change'.[2] He assumes that the candidate has the kind of faith in Christ that he himself has, an overpowering devotion which sweeps him out of his past life and out of his mere self.

The question of the Baptism of an insincere candidate is never raised, though in one remarkable passage (1 Cor. x, 1 ff.) St Paul uses an allegorical illustration from the Old

[1] Article xxv of the xxxix Articles.

[2] Professor H. L. Goudge in the *New Commentary* (N.T.), p. 421.

Testament to emphasize the fact that both Baptism and the Lord's Supper may fail of their due effect. According to the Book of Numbers (xiv, 29, 37, xxvi, 64, 65; cf. Ps. lxxviii, 18 and cvi, 14) most of the Israelites who were 'under the cloud', and 'passed through the sea', and who also ate of the manna and drank of the water from the rock, were overthrown in the wilderness. GOD, therefore, could not have been well pleased with them. Here St Paul, after the manner of the rabbis, sees an allegory. The Israelites represent Christians; their 'baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea', Christian baptism; their partaking of spiritual meat and drink, the partaking of the Lord's Supper. Hence, the Apostle argues, it does not follow that, because you have been baptized and because you partake of the Lord's Supper, you are in GOD's sight in a satisfactory condition. The Corinthians were evidently in danger of taking a mechanical view of the Christian rites and attributing to them merely as ceremonies some kind of automatic or quasi-magical effect.

St Paul, then, found Baptism as the already established rite of admission into the Christian Society. Baptism in the name of Jesus the Messiah followed upon repentance. Those who repented and were by Baptism admitted to join the company of the Messiah's people received remission of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii, 38).

St Paul emphasizes the reception of the Spirit at Baptism, using the metaphor of drinking. 'In one Spirit', he says, 'were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit' (1 Cor. xii, 13).

And the effect of the gift of the Spirit on which he lays stress is not the speaking with tongues or anything of that sort, but the flooding of our hearts with the love of GOD (Rom. v, 5).

St Paul did much to deepen the significance of Baptism in Christian thought. In illustration of this it may be noticed that he practically discards the metaphor of washing[1] for that of burial and resurrection (or rebirth). The convert is not merely bathed: he recapitulates the experience of his Lord; he dies and comes to life again, the new life, the life *in Christ Jesus*.

The Lord's Supper

(1 Cor. xi, 17–34 and x, 14–22)

Here again it is an already established institution with which St Paul is concerned. As to the exact form which 'the breaking of the bread' took before the Apostle's time we know hardly anything. The common meals of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem were no doubt 'accompanied by table prayers of the familiar Jewish type',[2] that is by 'benedictions', the blessing of GOD for His gifts of bread and wine and of the other food provided. Was reference made on every occasion to what happened on the night before the Lord died? There is no reason to suppose so. On the contrary, if the evidence of that strange little early Christian hand-book, the *Didache*, counts for anything at all,

[1] He uses this metaphor once, in 1 Cor. vi, 11.
[2] A. D. Nock, *op cit.* p. 128.

we are forced to the conclusion that sacred meals at which there was a Eucharist (*εὐχαριστία*), a giving of thanks connected with Jesus, did not always include anything like a narrative of the Last Supper.

And further it is plain that whatever else took place at these Christian meals physical hunger and thirst were satisfied. They were real meals. Of ritual meals, meals in which only a fragment of bread and a sip of wine were taken, we hear nothing until a later date. The transition to the latter was not unnatural, especially in view of such abuses as those which St Paul had to condemn (1 Cor. xi, 20–22, 33, 34).

What particularly struck St Luke in connexion with the earliest Christian meals was, as we have already seen (Chapter 1), their simplicity, their joyousness, and the family feeling which prevailed. The dominant note was fellowship, real fellowship of spirit.

From what St Paul says in 1 Cor. xi it is clear that he himself always connected this meal of Christian fellowship with the scene in the Upper Room on the night of the Lord's betrayal. As to that scene he followed a tradition which he himself had received through earlier Christians, a tradition traceable ultimately,[1] as he believed, to the Lord Himself. In point of fact there was more than one tradition as to the precise events of the evening before the Crucifixion;[2] but according to St Paul's own account (1 Cor. xi, 23–26) Jesus

[1] 1 Cor. xi, 23. Note *ἀπό* (not *παρά*, Gal. i, 12) and the word *παρέλαβον* (elsewhere in St Paul's writings only of instruction from a Christian teacher) and cf. 1 Cor. viii, 10, xiv, 37.

[2] See note 1 at the end of this chapter.

had not only Himself 'broken the bread', but had intimated His desire that the rite should be afterwards repeated by His followers *with a view to recalling* Him to memory (*vv.* 24, 25), that is in order to bring the Lord Himself vividly to mind. In taking part in the Lord's Supper Christians were 'proclaiming the Lord's death' (*v.* 26), and they should go on doing this till He came again.

In this dramatic re-enactment of the Last Supper St Paul saw a symbolic representation of the Death of Jesus. That indeed is what he thought the Lord meant the Last Supper itself to be: a symbolic presentation of the impending sacrifice of Himself, in order to bring His disciples into willing and grateful acceptance of it and thereby into a new covenant relation with GOD.

The Last Supper probably took place in the evening which began the day Nisan 14th, and therefore was not the Passover meal proper which the Jews ate the next evening. But still it was a meal full of Passover associations. Passover was celebrated by the Jews in a dramatic way. They ate the Passover lamb in haste, standing, and girt as if about to set out for a journey; thus re-enacting the original Passover scene as depicted in Exodus xii. So, at a later time at all events, it could be thought that the Lord had made His last meal with His disciples a kind of pre-dated, anticipatory Passover, and He Himself, in view of His approaching death, had (dramatically as it were) taken the place of the Passover lamb.

In another passage in this epistle (1 Cor. v, 7) St Paul speaks of Christ as the Passover lamb: 'For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ'. The blood of the

first Passover lamb was a token of GOD's covenant[1] to save the Israelites as His people when the Egyptians were punished. 'And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt' (Ex. xii, 13). So in the Lord's Supper the Cup is connected with a new covenant under the terms of which GOD saves His people, the new Israel, the Church: 'This cup is the new[2] covenant in my blood' (1 Cor. xi, 25). Thus the whole action of the rite is viewed together as a re-enactment of the Last Supper and so a re-presentation of the Lord's sacrificial death. Those who take part in it share the benefits associated with the new covenant-relation with GOD inaugurated by that death.

To use such an occasion for selfish and even excessive eating and drinking as some of the Corinthians were doing (1 Cor. xi, 21) was an outrage of the grossest kind. St Paul urges his readers at all costs to avoid such desecration. It brings GOD's judgement and chastisement upon the community. In evidence of this the Apostle points to the fact that a number of the Christians at Corinth were suffering from general debility, and some had died.

As in the Passover the rite is taken as a whole and no great stress is laid upon any moment in it (certainly not, for instance, on the actual consumption of the lamb); so in the Lord's Supper. The whole must be held together as

[1] Probably other passages from the Old Testament, e.g. Ex. xxiv, 8, were also in the Apostle's mind.

[2] Cf. Jer. xxxi, 31.

a dramatic unity. Emphasis on some supposed moment of consecration or on the actual reception of the consecrated elements belongs to a much later developement: so also does the idea that the elements were in themselves life-giving food or the 'drug of immortality'. It is to be observed that St Paul never speaks of eating the Lord's body or drinking the Lord's blood.[1] We eat of the bread and in eating it we, together with our fellow-Christians, partake of Christ's body: we drink of the cup and in doing so we, together with our fellow-Christians, partake of His blood (1 Cor. x, 16, 17). If we eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, we are guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord (xi, 27).

In the Book of Common Prayer Cranmer similarly avoids identifying the bread and the wine with the body and the blood in the beautifully chosen words of the central petition in the Prayer of Consecration: 'Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood...'. The bread and the wine are symbols; and when the Lord said 'this *is* my body' He was not referring to identity but to representation—'this *represents* my body'.[2] But the symbols are not

[1] Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* III, xv, 41 ('When we call grain Ceres or wine Liber, we merely use a common style of speech, but do you think that anyone is so insane as to suppose that what he eats is God?').

[2] Similarly St Paul himself, e.g. Gal. iv, 24, 'these women *are* two covenants', i.e. these women *represent* two covenants.

bare symbols: they are 'effectual' symbols, symbols that really effect something.

Moreover, like the rabbis in the Talmud, St Paul loves to play on the double meaning of words and to dart from one sense or one association to another. Thus the Lord's body is the Church: we are the Lord's body; we ourselves therefore may be spoken of as bread.[1] Perhaps the thought of the Church as the body of Christ is in St Paul's mind in xi, 29: 'For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgement unto himself, if he discern not the body'. Certainly the idea of the meal as the fellowship meal, the meal of the Christian society, is never absent. It comes out again, for example, in the passage in which the Apostle contrasts the table of the Lord with the table of devils[2] (1 Cor. x, 21). The Christian must not take part both in the sacred meal of the Christian society and also in a meal associated with a pagan cult. What pagan meals St Paul has in mind we do not exactly know. Two very interesting specimens of actual invitations to dinner 'at the couch of the Lord Sarapis' (one adding 'in the Serapeum') written on scraps of papyrus have been unearthed at Oxyrhynchus.[3] Such a dinner differed very little from a dinner to which a man nowadays invites his friend in a hotel except that the god was thought to preside.

At the Christian meal the Lord presides: indeed the

[1] Cf. also in 1 Cor. v, 8, '*the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*'.

[2] Demons being, in the Apostle's as in the Jewish view, behind heathen sacrifices and idols (cf. Deut. xxxii, 17).

[3] *Pap. Oxy.* 110, 523.

repetition of His original words suggests that He in reality is the host, and that those who partake are His guests. The sense of guest fellowship with one another and with the Lord presiding was keen and vivid among the early Christians. In those days, indeed, 'common meals implied union in a degree which we do not readily imagine'.[1]

Finally it is important constantly to bear in mind the purpose with which this whole section on the Lord's Supper is introduced into St Paul's letter. The Apostle's motive in bringing up the subject is clearly to correct certain abuses in conduct on the part of the Corinthian Christians. Some of them had been rash enough to accept invitations to dine with friends in connexion with a pagan cult and thereby to countenance idolatry and at all events to scandalize their fellow-Christians. Others had come to the Lord's Supper itself without due preparation and so had eaten the bread and drunk the cup of the Lord unworthily: some indeed had been guilty of outrageous irreverence. St Paul urges all these to be and to behave as befits persons privileged to take part in so holy a service. 'Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast,[2] not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with

[1] A. D. Nock, *op. cit.* 125. Mr Nock adds, 'and such meals in honour of the dead are still held in modern Greece and elsewhere'.

[2] Here, as the context shews, St Paul is not referring particularly to the Lord's Supper, but to the Christian life as a whole, under the metaphor of a festival (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* viii: '*All his* (i.e. the Christian's) *life is a holy festival*').

the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth' (1 Cor. v, 5–7).

NOTE 1. *On the different traditions in the early Church with regard to the Institution of the Lord's Supper*

Read and compare carefully: Mk. xiv, 17–26; Mt. xxvi, 20–30; Lk. xxii, 14–38; 1 Cor. xi, 23–25

It is uncertain what was the original text of St Luke in this passage. The full text as read in the R.V. is given in the authorities called by Westcott and Hort 'Neutral'. These authorities, it is now generally agreed, give us what was the true text in the view of the great Alexandrian scholar Origen at the beginning of the third century A.D.

Another type of text, still generally referred to by the name Westcott and Hort gave to it as the 'Western' text, though it has since been discovered that it was apparently the common text read in earlier times both in the East and in the West, gives us here a shorter reading. In point of fact the 'Western' manuscripts are divided. The majority stop at the word 'body' in *v.* 19 and omit *v.* 20. Others put *v.* 19 before *v.* 17. Perhaps in the original text as written by St Luke both *vv.* 19 and 20 were wanting. We might then connect the omission here with the fact that in the Acts St Luke speaks of 'the breaking of the bread' as the fellowship-meal of the early Christians without giving the slightest hint of any connexion between it and the Last Supper.

But, however that may be, some early authorities, as represented by the majority of the 'Western' manuscripts, place the giving of the cup (without the words 'This is my

blood') before the breaking of the bread with the words 'This is my body'.[1] And if the meal was not really the Passover meal but rather 'a Kiddush' of the kind commonly held in a Jewish house on the return of the family from the synagogue on the Sabbath evening, then the cup would naturally have preceded the bread.

Thus there are at least two early traditions as to the order of the meal: and by comparing all the four accounts given in the New Testament it will be seen that there is considerable doubt as to the exact words spoken by our Lord.

In particular the question arises as to whether or not He expressly directed the repetition of what then took place. Scholars are agreed that the words 'Do this with a view to recalling me' belong to the true text only in 1 Cor. xi, 24, 25.

How are we to explain the fact that they are wanting in the three Synoptic Gospels?

Must we suppose that when St Paul says that he received his own account 'from the Lord' he means partly from the Lord through His earlier disciples and partly from the Lord without such intermediaries: and that it was St Paul himself who inserted the words 'do this with a view to recalling me' because he had come to believe that that was the Lord's intention and felt that what he was convinced was implicit in the tradition he had received ought to be made explicit?

[1] This order occurs again in the *Didache* and is rather suggested by 1 Cor. x, 16.

Note 2. *The Christian rites and 'the Mysteries'*

It will have been noticed that Baptism, especially according to St Paul's conception of it as the drama of the passing of the convert from the old life to the new, and the Eucharist, with its dramatic re-enactment of the Last Supper, itself a dramatic presentation of the Crucifixion, belong to that type of religious observance of which the 'Mystery Religions' give us other instances.

In the secret rites of the Mystery Religions the votary recapitulated the experience of his lord and in so doing obtained the sense of blessed communion with him and the promise of, one day, entering into his crowning experience, the experience of immortality. Christian Baptism is not a secret rite: otherwise in St Paul's conception of it it is almost an exact parallel.

In the 'Mystery' rites the details are uncertain: sacred objects were shewn to the initiates, possibly they partook of food. But so far as we know such items were subordinated to the action of the drama as a whole. It was regarded as a whole, a whole reproducing the experience of the cult lord.

The Christian rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were to St Paul and his converts similar dramatic wholes. The water, or the formula of baptism, was not isolated from the rest of the rite and given a magical or quasi-magical value in itself: nor was the bread or the wine or even the repetition of the Lord's own words in the Eucharist.

Are we to suppose, then, that the Apostle was deliberately

copying these heathen 'Mysteries'? St Paul was and remained too much of a Jew for this to be probable. The actual mysteries of the pagans he no doubt viewed with profound disapproval as Philo did.[1]

But while each particular 'mystery' had its own peculiar details the general idea shared by them all had to a very considerable extent passed into the common stock of religious thought to which reference was made in Chapter IV. Certainly words like 'mysterion', 'teleios', had become part of the ordinary vocabulary of religion.[2]

St Paul always felt himself to be the Apostle of the Gentiles and he was far too keen and efficient a missionary not to pay some attention to, and have a certain sympathy with, the thought of the men and women whom he wished to reach. Judaism itself gave him a starting point for religious rites of a dramatic kind, especially in the festival of the Passover: and the Christian institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were already to hand when he became a Christian. It was not difficult for him to see in these simple and beautiful observances just the very thing that would appeal to the Gentiles, just the very thing that, in the providence of GOD, they had been prepared by the general current of religious thought to receive and welcome.

It would be still more natural for St Paul's converts themselves to view the Christian religion as the newest and

[1] Philo is very emphatic in his denunciation. See especially *De spec. leg.* I, 319.

[2] It is worth noting that no Christian writer before Clement of Alexandria uses the word 'mysterion' of the Sacraments.

the best of the Mysteries. Obviously it had superiority over all the others and that at least in three respects.

(1) First, the Lord was not a mythical figure but a real person the memory of whose nobility and goodness was alive among His followers.

(2) Secondly, there was a better theory of His death than of the death of any of the cult deities of the pagans. For their deaths no reason was suggested at all. The Lord's death was vicarious: it was part of GOD's purpose and plan: it was 'according to the Scriptures': it was for the saving of the world.

(3) And thirdly, in the Christian religion as in no other, rites were indissolubly bound up with morals. Unless the votary accepted the moral standard (and there was no higher standard than that set in the Christian religion) he was offered no comfort from the liturgical performances.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

In addition to the books already mentioned at the end of Chapter v:

G. ANRICH. *Das antike Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christentum.* (Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1894.)

A. LOISY. *Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétien.* (E. Nourry, 1914.)

A. D. NOCK. In *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation.* Ed. A. E. J. Rawlinson. (Longmans, 1928.)

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ADMISSION OF THE GENTILES AND THE FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH

WHILE St Paul was in retirement in Arabia an important developement had taken place at Antioch. It was there that systematic missionary work among the Gentiles was first undertaken. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene were the pioneers in this work, 'And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord' (Acts xi, 20, 21).

The Church at Jerusalem, which evidently did not regard St Peter's baptism of Cornelius as a sufficient precedent for the evangelization of the Gentiles on a large scale, sent one of the most respected of their number, Barnabas, himself both a Levite and a Cypriot (iv, 36) to inspect the work at Antioch. Barnabas found nothing to object to, 'for he was a good man'—a kind and sensible man—full of Holy Spirit and of faith (xi, 24). He encouraged the Christians, Jew and Gentile alike, to 'cleave unto the Lord' 'with purpose of heart' (*v.* 23) and himself brought a new recruit from Tarsus to help forward the missionary campaign in the person of St Paul. St Paul, after coming out of his retirement, had proved himself to be a stout and able defender of the faith in the synagogues at Damascus till he had been hounded out of the city by his former allies. After a short visit to Jerusalem, where the enmity of the Jews still dogged his footsteps, he had found

his way to Tarsus his native city. Perhaps it was on the occasion of this visit to Jerusalem that he realized that his future work would be among the Gentiles (xxii, 17).

At any rate Barnabas seems to have had no difficulty in persuading him to come to Antioch, and there the two friends worked as colleagues for a whole year, 'and taught much people' (xi, 26). Their work prospered so much that the populace of the city found it worth while to invent for the members of the growing society one of the nicknames for which they were famous in antiquity. From the word 'Christos' 'anointed', the real origin and associations of which they would be ignorant of, they called the disciples 'Christians'; and the name stuck.

It is at this point that St Luke records an incident which illustrates the friendly relations subsisting between the Church at Antioch and the Mother Church at Jerusalem. A Christian prophet from Jerusalem had foretold a famine, meaning thereby, apparently, a period of general scarcity. Perhaps his fears may have had special reference to Jerusalem, though St Luke does not say so. In any case it would not be an inference difficult to draw that such a famine would be particularly serious for the Christian community in Jerusalem with its numerous dependents. Thus the Christians at Antioch determined to organize relief for their brethren.

The famine occurred some time after the death of Herod Agrippa, probably about A.D. 46. Barnabas and Paul were sent as bearers of the contribution from the Church of Antioch. This is therefore, according to St Luke's account, the second visit of St Paul to Jerusalem since his conversion.

In that case it would seem to correspond with the visit of which St Paul himself speaks in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians. If so, questions concerning the conditions under which Gentiles should be admitted to the Church were informally discussed (Gal. ii, 2).

The circumcision of Titus, a young man who had accompanied Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem, was a test case. Should Titus who was a Gentile be compelled to undergo circumcision, i.e. to become a Jew, as a condition of his admission into membership of the Church? It is not clear from St Paul's language whether Titus was or was not eventually circumcized. But what St Paul states quite definitely is that no compulsion was put upon Titus in the matter (ii, 3); and that every encouragement was given to himself and Barnabas to go on with the good work of winning the Gentiles to the faith (ii, 9).

The identification of the second visit mentioned in Acts with that referred to in Gal. ii is by no means certain, but it facilitates the chronology of St Paul's movements, and the objections sometimes urged against it do not seem to be serious. If systematic ingathering of the Gentiles had already for a year or more been in progress at Antioch such questions must necessarily have arisen: and they were questions of difficulty and delicacy which would probably have had to be often discussed both privately and publicly before a proper settlement of them could be arrived at.

On the other hand, it is possible that in Gal. ii St Paul is really referring, as Bishop Lightfoot thought, to the visit described by St Luke in Acts xv, when the question was

considered by the whole Church of Jerusalem and a decision reached and formulated.[1]

The first of these suggested solutions however appears on the whole to be freest of difficulty, and it is accepted by a large number, if not the majority, of modern scholars. For our present purpose it makes no material difference whichever solution we prefer: but for the sake of clearness we shall provisionally accept that which, on the whole, appears to be the safest, viz. the first. On this view it was with the encouragement of the leading Christians at Jerusalem that Barnabas and Paul returned to the work at Antioch. That encouragement may, indeed, have had something to do with the wider enterprise upon which the two missionaries soon embarked. They were commissioned by the Church at Antioch to go on a missionary tour into Cyprus and Asia Minor.

It does not fall within the scope of our present story to follow St Paul from place to place upon this tour or upon the two subsequent tours which are described in the Acts. But we must endeavour to understand the general principles and methods of his work.

'To the Jew first and also to the Greek',[2]—the words are the Apostle's and might well be taken as a motto for a chapter describing the missionary work recorded in the Acts.

[1] Or even that Acts xi, xv and Gal. ii all really refer to the same visit. If we adopt this last suggestion we must of course admit that there is some little confusion in St Luke's narrative; but at the worst the degree of the confusion involved is only slight: for of the visit mentioned in Acts xi St Luke tells us almost nothing.

[2] Rom. ii, 10.

In all the great cities were to be found settlements of foreign traders: the separate nationalities generally in separate quarters; and among them we must reckon the Jews. Every such Jewish quarter would normally contain one or more synagogues where Sabbath by Sabbath the Jews assembled for prayer and above all to hear the reading and exposition of the Scriptures, i.e. of course, the Old Testament. Any competent person might give the exposition, and it was a very common practice to invite a distinguished stranger to do so.

Now it is clear from what St Luke tells us in the Acts that St Paul adopted a definite plan of campaign and that his plan was somewhat as follows: keeping generally to one of the great Roman roads, he would make for a city containing a Jewish settlement, paying as a rule little attention to the smaller places and the countryside through which he passed; he would then as soon as possible after his arrival get into touch with the synagogue.

The next step would depend upon the authorities of the synagogue and generally they would be very glad to invite St Paul to preach. The Apostle, indeed, was by early training particularly well qualified to do so. St Luke gives us the outline of his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch, intending, no doubt, that it should be regarded as a typical sermon to a synagogue audience (Acts xiii, 16–41).

St Paul begins by reminding his hearers at some length of the special care God has in the past shewn for His people Israel. He then goes on to say that now at last God has sent the promised Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, proving Him to be Messiah by raising Him

from the dead. All the blessings, therefore, associated with the Messianic salvation are now available through Jesus.

Such an address would naturally arouse the interest of such an audience, and would commonly be followed by others in which the preacher would develope and explain subjects upon which he had only been able to touch in his first sermon, e.g. the reason for the Crucifixion.

Now, as we have already seen, St Paul had adopted a position similar to that of St Stephen with regard to the Mosaic Law; and sooner or later this fact would become plain to his hearers. Their Jewish prejudices would then be aroused, and the withdrawal, if not the expulsion, of the Apostle from the synagogue would follow as a matter of course.

But, generally speaking, he would not depart alone. For in most Jewish synagogues in the great cities of the Empire were to be found Gentiles to whom the lofty monotheism and the high moral standard of Judaism had made a strong appeal. In Acts such persons are spoken of as 'god-fearers' (*sebomenoi*). They were not, strictly-speaking, proselytes: few of them, probably, had any definite intention of being circumcized and becoming proselytes proper. But they had to some extent, if more or less loosely, attached themselves to the synagogue: and no doubt the synagogue authorities were glad of their support and cherished hopes of winning them eventually as complete adherents.

To such persons St Paul's preaching must have been particularly attractive; and most attractive of all just at the point where it became offensive to the Jews themselves.

A monotheism which, while retaining a high ethical standard, offered, instead of a set of singularly awkward ritual regulations, a redeemer superior to all the redeemer-gods of the mystery religions in that He was a real historical person concerning whom the preacher himself gave a glowing personal testimony—such a monotheism had more than all the merits of Judaism without its disadvantages.

It is not to be wondered at that the 'god-fearers' in large numbers left the synagogue with St Paul, and that the Jewish authorities were often mad with jealousy at the way in which the new preacher had out-bid them.

St Paul's next step, in such circumstances, would usually be to find another centre for his work and to gather his new friends around it and build them up into a little society. Other Gentiles would be attracted, and some who had had no previous connexion with Judaism. To these, no doubt, the Gospel appealed as the good news of a new and superior mystery religion: and we know enough of St Paul to feel sure that he made the Christian rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper the vehicles of the kind of instruction which such hearers had been prepared by their previous experience to understand. Indeed in his Epistles, as we have already seen, we have proof that he did so.

St Luke himself gives us no specimen of St Paul's preaching to a purely Gentile audience, except a very brief outline of his speech at Athens, and a sentence or two summarizing his remonstrance with the pagan crowd at Lystra which was attempting to worship him and Barnabas. The former, however, at least suggests that St Paul was well aware that Stoicism and the Gospel had considerable

ground in common; and also that he laid great stress on Ethics and on the fact that the Christian redeemer had been appointed to be judge of mankind. And both these suggestions receive ample confirmation from St Paul's own writings.

As it happens, this is not the side of missionary work which is of special interest to St Luke. It is clear that, for instance, St Paul's eighteen months at Corinth and his long stay at Ephesus must have been largely occupied by work of this kind among the Gentiles. But though St Luke tells us that both at Corinth and at Ephesus it was not long before St Paul had to retire from the synagogue, in the one case to a private house and in the other to a lecture-room (free, according to one ancient reading,[1] only in the afternoons), he gives us little further detail.

What St Luke is concerned to shew, is, rather, first that the Jews were always given the first opportunity of hearing the Gospel and their exclusion from the new Israel of GOD was therefore their own doing; and secondly that there was nothing in the preaching of the Gospel to which the Romans could reasonably object, the actual fact being that the officials, who, like Gallio and Festus, really knew their duty, had not shewn the least hostility to it. Educated persons therefore like Theophilus, for whose special benefit St Luke's history was written, need have no misgivings about the Church either on the ground that it was not the true successor to the Church of the Old Testament or on the ground that it involved disloyalty to the Roman

[1] The reading of the 'Western' text (Acts xix, 9).

government. It is plain that St Luke wishes to lay stress on both these points.

But we must return to the missionaries themselves. It is clear that while in some places their labour bore little fruit, in other places, notably at Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus, they left behind them strong and flourishing societies. In the meantime the problem of the terms on which Gentiles should be admitted into membership of the Church had come to a head (Acts xv, and cf. Gal. ii, 1–14).

The opinion that circumcision was necessary to salvation found many advocates, especially in Jerusalem and among the Pharisees who had become Christians. It seems as if a party was formed which actually sent emissaries to correct the preaching of St Paul not only in Antioch, but among the Galatians. Who these Galatians were is not quite certain, and for our purpose the question is immaterial. But again it will conduce to clearness if we make a provisional choice among the possibilities open to us. We shall therefore follow what appears on the whole to be the easier and safer theory and suppose that the term refers to the inhabitants of the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia to whom Barnabas and St Paul preached on their first missionary journey. We shall further suppose, with the support of probably the majority of modern scholars (at any rate in Great Britain), that St Paul wrote his letter to these Christians not long after his return from visiting them. The emissaries from James of whom he speaks (Gal. ii, 12) may then be identified with 'certain men from Judæa' mentioned by St Luke (Acts xv, 1).

These men gave rise to much disputing at Antioch and in particular made trouble about meals in which Jewish and Gentile Christians ate together. This eating of Jews with Gentiles had indeed been a point which had all along[1] exercised the minds of the stricter Jewish Christians.

The final upshot of the contentions on these matters was a conference at Jerusalem where the whole problem was gone into; and, according to St Luke's account, in an atmosphere of general friendliness a solution was soon arrived at.

The main principle for which St Paul and his friends contended was undoubtedly conceded. Whether the famous decree (Acts xv, 19, 20: 28, 29) represents a compromise on minor points or not is a matter of little importance. The evidence, on the whole, however, seems to be distinctly in favour of the former alternative. In that case we may take it that it was decided, in order to facilitate the intercourse between Gentile and Jewish Christians, to direct the former to abstain from eating meat from which the blood had not been drained and meat that had been offered to an idol. It was felt desirable also at the same time to add an express warning against fornication, a practice not sufficiently condemned by the pagan teachers and even connected with some forms of pagan worship.

It must be admitted that, whatever interpretation be put upon it, the decree reads somewhat strangely. And as the regulation was definitely intended in the first instance for the Churches of Syria and Cilicia (*v.* 23),[2] it is not sur-

[1] Cf. Acts xi, 3.

[2] Though St Luke notes that it was actually delivered to the Churches of Southern Galatia also (Acts xvi, 4).

prising that when St Paul had to deal with similar problems under different conditions and in a different area, he preferred not to fall back upon the decree but to argue from first principles.

It is not improbable, moreover, that St Luke himself loses sight to some extent of the limitation of the scope of the decree, and thinks of the conference as a body making a permanent regulation for the whole Church.

In any case, however, the precedent now established was a precedent of the utmost importance for the Church's future, and St Luke is essentially justified in giving it a position of prominence in the very centre of his history.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

KIRSOPP LAKE. *The Earlier Epistles of St Paul.* (Rivington, 1911.)

A. VON HARNACK. *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums.* E. Tr. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity.* (Williams and Norgate, 1915.)

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TRANSMUTATION OF FIRST HOPES

CHRISTIANITY was born in a country which was fuller than any other of eschatological hopes, that is of hopes of a great interposition of GOD which should bring the present age to an end and usher in a better. Visions of a vast upheaval often including tremendous disturbances of nature, lightnings, thunders, earthquakes, shooting stars, auroral colours, portents, all terrifying and aimed at the wicked, floated wildly before the eyes of dreamers like the author of 'the Assumption of Moses'.[1] During the seventy years before the fall of Jerusalem demagogues and fanatics were continually rising up and trying to excite the peasantry. Josephus the historian gives us some of their names, and there must have been many more whose efforts were too insignificant for him to notice. The impression he leaves with us is that unsettlement rapidly increased after the death of Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 44. The procurators who followed him were, with one or two exceptions like the honest Festus, a poor set of men, arrogant and ineffective. The country gradually got out of hand until the rebellion of A.D. 66–70 was the result.

All this time there can be little doubt that the phrase 'the kingdom of God' was in Jewish minds closely associated with eschatological expectations of a signal intervention of God which should bring the present order

[1] A Palestinian pamphlet to be dated probably about A.D. 6.

of things to an end and set up a new age in which GOD's sovereignty would be actually realized upon earth. In this Kingdom of GOD, GOD's anointed, the Messiah, would reign as King.

Now, as we have already seen, the first belief entertained by the disciples about Jesus was that He was Himself this Messiah, already anointed in heaven but not yet manifested as King upon earth. In due time, at the moment foreordained by GOD, He would actually return as King in all the pomp and circumstance of royalty. And the disciples believed that that moment was close at hand.

In Jerusalem itself they seem to have lived in daily expectation of their Lord's return, and to have thought of no provision for the future. Their capital, they supposed, would last out the old order: and under the new King everything would be changed.

According to the Gospels Jesus Himself had emphasized the central idea in the eschatological hope, the idea of the sovereignty of GOD manifested upon earth, and had encouraged belief in the closeness of its manifestation. He had used the imagery already associated in Jewish minds with this manifestation. Even the scene of the Great Assize, in Mt. xxv, 31–46, is not a new scene, but exactly, so far as the stage and its appointments are concerned, the scene popularly imagined in connexion with that great event, and depicted for example in the Book of Enoch. It is the meaning of it that Jesus transforms. Those who are commended are no longer (as in Jewish eschatological literature) persons who have punctiliously observed the Jewish Law, nor are the oppressors (like the Romans)

of the chosen people those who are condemned. The blessed are those who have shewn true human kindness to their fellow men: the cursed are those who have not.

But in spite of the change of emphasis introduced by Jesus, we still find His disciples after His death taking the eschatological appurtenances of Jewish expectation very seriously and literally.

Their attitude is represented by the question associated in Christian tradition with Ascension Day, 'Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts i, 6). St Luke himself belongs to a later generation and it is clear that his own belief is expressed in the reply, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority' (Acts i, 7).[1]

It was among those Christians who were Jews or those who had been '*sebomenoi*', adherents to Judaism, before they had become Christians, that these eschatological hopes were most widely entertained. Thus it is at Thessalonica where the bulk of the Christian society consisted of these '*sebomenoi*' (Acts xvii, 4) that we hear of eschatological frenzy giving rise to serious problems. Our information comes from the two letters addressed to the Thessalonians by 'Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy'.

In the first place we must notice that the Thessalonian Christians had been suffering active persecution: 'Ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like

[1] Note also *v.* 11, 'this same Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come'—not 'ye shall see him so come'.

things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews' (1 Thes. ii, 14).[1] It is, of course, only natural that under suffering the Christians should turn with more ardent expectation to the anticipation of future vindication and triumph.

Secondly, we observe that the special anxiety felt by the Thessalonians was not on their own account. They were disappointed that some of their number had died before the Lord had come, and therefore would not see Him in the flesh (1 Thes. iv, 13–16). The survivors, evidently holding a view of the relation between soul and body nearer the Hebrew view that man is 'an animated body' than the Greek view that he is 'an incarnated soul',[2] were afraid that their friends had sustained an irreparable loss.

The writers of the Epistle, however, hasten to re-assure them: so far from suffering loss 'the dead in Christ shall rise first' (1 Thes. iv, 16). It is worth while quoting their exact words, for they give us, as it were, a vignette of the Parousia (i.e. the coming) of Jesus, as it was conceived of at this time: 'the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thes. iv, 16, 17).

Here the general background is still the background as

[1] Cf. also iii, 3, 4.

[2] See H. W. Robinson on 'Hebrew Psychology' in *The People and the Book* (ed. A. S. Peake), p. 362.

described in the later Jewish Apocalypses:[1] but the central hope is the hope of the presence of the Lord. The Thessalonians had not long been Christians and they were not at all mature or perfect Christians:[2] yet to set before their minds the highest degree of blessedness it was sufficient to say simply 'so shall we ever be with the Lord'.

If this is so it is evident that already the immediacy of the advent of the Lord is not of the very essence of their hope. If the moment of His coming is delayed they will learn to be patient (2 Thes. iii, 5).[3] Their own duty is plain. They must be on the alert, ever prepared, like a soldier on guard (1 Thes. v, 6, 8), keeping themselves fit and steady and in good training. So, and so only, will the expectation of the Lord's return remain keen and healthy and invigorating.

It would be difficult to find a better example of the gradual transmutation of the Christian hope of the future than that which took place in the case of St Paul himself. Right down to the end of his long stay at Ephesus (Acts xix, 10—in what is commonly called his third missionary journey) he seems to have assumed that he himself would be alive when the Lord returned to the earth. This is certainly the expectation of the writers of the Epistles to the Thessalonians of whom St Paul was at least one (1 Thes.

[1] I.e. books containing revelations, generally revelations concerning heaven or the future and especially concerning 'last things'. Cf. also the Jewish figure of 'the man of sin' found in 2 Thes. ii, 3–10.

[2] Note the warnings against impurity (1 Thes. iv, 3, 4), laziness (2 Thes. iii, 10), and so on.

[3] Cf. James v, 7.

iv, 15).[1] No change is observable in the passage in 1 Corinthians (an epistle written during this long stay in Ephesus), in which St Paul deals with the subject (1 Cor. xv).[2] Then came the severe affliction of which the Apostle speaks in 2 Corinthians (written some months later from Macedonia). 'We were weighed down exceedingly', he writes, 'beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead' (2 Cor. i, 8, 9).

St Paul realized as never before the frailty of his body.[3] He recognized how easily the earthly house of his bodily frame might be dissolved, and reflected that to be absent from the body would be to be at home with the Lord, and that he would prefer to be with the Lord (2 Cor. v, 6–8). Here the alternative—that he might survive till the Lord's return to earth—is tacitly dismissed. And it is dismissed for good.

Thus when St Paul contemplates the possibility, on the one hand of being released from his imprisonment at Rome and re-visiting his friends at Philippi, and on the other of being put to death, he writes: 'I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and to be with Christ; for

[1] It is possible that, as Professor Burkitt has suggested (*Christian Beginnings*, pp. 130 ff.), these epistles were actually written by Silvanus: but at any rate St Paul agreed with their contents sufficiently to allow them to go out under his name. 1 Thes. i, 1, v, 27; 2 Thes. i, 1, iii, 17.

[2] Note especially *vv.* 51, 52.

[3] 'Our outward man is decaying,' 2 Cor. iv, 16.

it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake' (Phil. i, 23, 24). And then he continues: 'And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith'. In any case the difference to himself is no great matter. For him 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (*v.* 21). And this for the Apostle is no new idea. In the Epistle, which, with a number of modern scholars, we have provisionally accepted as the earliest of his extant Epistles, the Epistle to the Galatians, what is essentially the same thought is already expressed: 'I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii, 20).

As we have already seen, mystical union with Christ is the foundation of all the Apostle's theology. But a theology built upon such a foundation has no place of first importance to give to the return of Christ to earth. And St Paul himself recognizes that this is so: 'even though we have known Christ after the flesh', he writes, 'yet now we know him so no more' (2 Cor. v, 16). The passage from the old to the new takes place at baptism, and so St Paul continues, 'Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away: behold, they are become new' (*v.* 17). The new life has begun already.

Similarly the phrase 'the kingdom of God' which, as we have seen, had an eschatological sound for Jewish ears, is very little used by St Paul. When he does use it, it is generally to emphasize the moral requirements connected with it (1 Cor. vi, 10). And in one famous passage he removes it entirely from eschatology: 'the kingdom of God',

he writes, 'is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xiv, 17).

Thus we see eschatology as a whole gradually sinking into a subordinate place in Christian theology. We can trace the progress further in the Epistle to the Hebrews.[1] 'Ye are come', writes the author of this epistle—come already—'unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect...' (Heb. xii, 22, 23).

Of course, in times when persecution threatened it was only natural for interest in the doctrine of 'last things' to revive. Thus the author of the first epistle of St Peter assures his readers upon whom 'a fiery trial' is coming that 'the end of all things is at hand' (1 Pet. iv, 7, 12).

And it was severe persecution in Asia Minor, probably in the time of the Emperor Domitian,[2] which called forth the burning eschatology of the Revelation of St John the Divine: 'I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations.... And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus' (Rev. xvii, 3 ff.).

[1] See below, Chapter X.

[2] A.D. 81–96.

The woman is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth (*v.* 18), i.e. of course, Rome.[1]

And an angel cried with a mighty voice, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of devils, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird (xviii, 1, 2). The kings of the earth... shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgement come (*vv.* 9, 10). And the merchants of the earth... cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein were made rich all that had their ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgement on her (*vv.* 11, 19, 20).

But even here there is one great thought which finally swallows up all expectations concerned with time and space, the thought of the eternal reality of the new Jerusalem already prepared in heaven (xxi, 1 ff.) 'And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new' (*v.* 5). To the lonely exile on the island of Patmos it is as good as done.

The process by which eschatological expectations are relegated into the background of Christian thought in normal times reaches its final stage in the Johannine writings.

Here the central idea is the idea of eternal life, life which

[1] All readers of such a writing as this, at the time, would know that 'Babylon' meant 'Rome'.

is of such a quality that it belongs in reality not to the world of time and space but to the eternal world. The Christian when he becomes a Christian enters into this life. It begins at once and is never really interrupted, not even by death.

No doubt the early tradition of Christ's return to earth is not entirely discarded (Jn. v, 28; 1 Jn. ii, 18). And if a time limit is thought of at all it is the limit suggested by such a phrase as that of St Luke, 'until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled' (Lk. xxi, 24), or by this sentence from St Matthew's Gospel, 'this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come' (Mt. xxiv, 14).

But the futility of speculation as to the date is realized more and more: 'of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father' (Mk. xiii, 32; Mt. xxiv, 36). And in the Fourth Gospel, and in the epistles which bear the name of John, the question is hardly raised. Here we are brought rather to dwell upon the eternal realities existing now and for ever: *God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life* (1 Jn. v, 12). *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever* (1 Jn. ii, 17).

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

F. C. Burkitt. *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses.* (Schweich Lectures, 1914.)

A. C. Hogg. *Christ's Message of the Kingdom.* (T. and T. Clark, 1911.)

CHAPTER NINE

THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

(Rom. xii and xiii; 1 Cor. xiii; Ephes. v, 22–vi, 9; Phil. iv; Col. iii, 18–25)

LET us try to picture a Christian family living say at Ephesus about A.D. 60. There were as yet few Christians among the upper classes.[1] We will suppose that the father of the family is a merchant in a small way of business and that his household consists of his wife and children and two or three slaves. The first thing we notice about him is that he pays attention to his business (Rom. xii, 11) and looks and behaves like an honourable man (*v.* 17). He is kind-hearted (*vv.* 14, 15), and ready to do anyone a good turn (*vv.* 18–21). He is law-abiding (xiii, 1–7), and pays his debts (xiii, 8). He does not push himself forward (xii, 16). He is clean minded (Phil. iv, 8), cheerful (1 Thes. v, 17), and considerate (Phil. iv, 5).

He and his wife are devoted to one another (Ephes. v, 25 ff.; 1 Pet. iii, 7). They do not fuss the children and their children look up to them (Col. iii, 21). They recognize their slaves who, we will suppose, are also Christians, as more than slaves, as 'brothers beloved' (Philemon 16); and the slaves do not take advantage of their kindness but do their work with a will (Ephes. vi, 6).

All the members of the family realize that they each have membership in the larger family, 'the brotherhood' (1 Pet. ii, 17), the Christian Church. The very word 'church'

[1] 1 Cor. i, 26.

(*ecclesia*) as used by the Christians is itself suggestive. It is the word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the Hebrew word which denotes 'the assembly of Israel' thought of as the chosen people of GOD; and the use of the word by the Christians suggests that they regard their society as the true successor of Israel of old (cf. Mt. xxi, 43) and as being GOD's chosen assembly.

There are by this time churches of GOD (1 Thes. ii, 14, etc.) in many places, the local representatives of the Church, i.e. the whole body of Christians in the world (1 Cor. xii, 28; Ephes. i, 22; Phil. iii, 6; Col. i, 18, 24, etc.).

Again and again St Paul compares the Church, this one unified society, to a human body of which the limbs represent the individual Christians and the head represents Christ (1 Cor. xii, 12–31; Ephes. iv, 4–16).

No other figure brings out so well the relation of the members to one another and to Him. They have each a function to perform in the service of all: they have living fellowship with each other, 'fellowship of the Spirit' (Phil. ii, 1), the Spirit of GOD (which is the Spirit of Christ) being in communion with each human spirit and bringing all together to make one 'holy temple', 'for a habitation of God in the Spirit' (Ephes. ii, 22).

The Church is the home of the Spirit and here, under the rule of Christ, Christians are safe from all their fears, fears of fate, of chance, of demons, all the fears which haunt the pagan world: safe and free, delivered from the tyranny of the flesh and free from the burden of Jewish legalism: safe through possessing, and being possessed by, the Spirit.

Special manifestations of the Spirit's power were looked for in connexion with the healing of the sick, inspired utterance in Christian meetings, visions, personal guidance in difficulty, and so on. The earliest accounts of such things which have come down to us are found in St Paul's Epistles and in those sections of the Acts which are written in the first person plural and evidently based on the observations of an eye-witness (Acts xvi, 10–18; xx, 5–26; xxvii–xxviii, 16).

The instances of healing given in these 'We' sections, as they are often called, are the restoration to soundness of mind of the poor girl at Philippi (xvi, 18), the quick recovery of Eutychus from a fall at Troas (xx, 10), and the relief of an old man's dysentery in the island of Melita (xxviii, 8), together with certain healings unspecified (*v.* 9). Of these the first and the third are to be attributed to the power of mind over body, the mind being the mind of a man (St Paul) highly charged with personal magnetism and keyed up to a condition of religious exaltation. The second illustrates the Apostle's collectedness in emergency. Eutychus was taken up unconscious. The bystanders thought him dead and saw in St Paul's action a parallel to Elijah's (1 Kings xvii, 21) and Elisha's (2 Kings iv, 34). But he was not really dead and he soon came round. Another example of St Paul's coolness at a critical moment occurred at Melita, when a viper from a bundle of sticks laid upon a newly-kindled fire fastened on his hand. The Apostle did not lose his head. He was able after a few moments to shake off 'the beast into the fire', and took no harm. The narrative does not say that he was actually bitten.

Thus, partly owing to the remarkable personalities and powers of what we should now perhaps call 'suggestion', possessed by such leaders as St Paul, through which certain cures (no doubt of functional rather than organic disorders) were really effected: and partly owing to deliverances which we should now term providential[1] rather than miraculous: some Apostles came to have a reputation for 'mighty works' (2 Cor. xii, 12), and this reputation itself helped them to further successes. No doubt the accounts of their doings gradually got magnified in the telling. In pre-scientific days people found marvels easy to believe. Tacitus speaks of the curing of the blind and the lame by the Emperor Vespasian: and so on. The Christians were no more, and probably a good deal less, credulous than their heathen neighbours.

And not only had a number of remarkable cures actually occurred, but also, what was still more important, there was to be taken into account many a miracle of changed life. The Lord Himself had deliberately gone to tax-gatherers and sinners, and His followers continued to make converts from among the disreputable. In 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10 St Paul enumerates various types of the unrighteous, and then goes on: 'And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God' (*v.* 11). Probably their success among the less respectable was partly responsible for the low opinion in which the Christians were held by the educated classes.

[1] Believing that the providence of God lies behind and in the whole course of the events of our life.

Moreover, where rescue work of this kind is going on, there is often the danger of emotional and other extravagances. The Salvation Army find it so today, as John Wesley did in the eighteenth century. In an entry in his journal dated Monday, April 3rd, 1786, he gives several instances:

> Frequently three or four, yea, ten or twelve, pray aloud altogether. Some of them, perhaps many, scream altogether as loud as they possibly can....Several drop down as dead, and are as stiff as a corpse. But in a while they start up, and cry Glory! Glory! perhaps twenty times together.

Wesley is very patient with them: 'Whenever we reprove them', he says, 'it should be in the most mild and gentle manner possible'. St Paul took up a rather similar attitude with regard to the rather similar abnormalities among his converts.

'Speaking with tongues', that is being worked up in a kind of ecstasy and uttering sounds which had no meaning for anyone but the speaker, was valued by the Christians. The pagans too were impressed in like manner by the utterances of their Sibyls or oracles. All these were commonly accepted as evidence of the presence of some supernatural spiritual power. It was because the Christians held that the ecstatic utterances which they heard in their gatherings were an indication of the presence of the Spirit of GOD that they set such store by them (1 Cor. xiv, 5).

So also did they value visions. Thus, it was when he was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day' that St John the Divine received his revelation (Rev. i, 10): and St Paul's visions

were numerous (2 Cor. xii, 1; Acts xvi, 9, xxvii, 23, 24, etc.). Divine guidance seemed sometimes to come through such a vision. So, after recording St Paul's famous vision of the man of Macedonia, St Luke goes on to say, 'And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them' (Acts xvi, 10). What a cheerful and courageous loyalty breathes in such words! It is noteworthy also that, apart from such visions, St Luke regards the movements of Paul and Silas as directed and controlled by 'the Spirit of Jesus' (Acts xvi, 7).

But we must return from such special manifestations of the Spirit's power to the normal life of the Christian society. It will be convenient to consider first the local ecclesia, and then the Ecclesia proper, i.e. the Whole.

The local ecclesia, the local branch of the Christian society, would meet in the house of one of its members.[1] A tiny but fascinating picture is given in the Acts of such a meeting at Troas at which the writer himself was present (Acts xx, 7–12). It was on the first day of the week that the Christians 'gathered together to break bread': evidently in the evening. The order of proceedings seems to have been a discourse (in this instance a very long one) followed by the fellowship meal and social intercourse (*v.* 11). There is a delightful simplicity and family feeling about the whole gathering. No doubt there was prayer; and, if not on that then on other occasions, the reading of the Old Testament. Letters from the Apostles and other Christian leaders soon

[1] In a large city like Ephesus after a time there must have been several such meeting places.

came to be read too, and sayings of the Lord would be quoted[1] and stories about Him told and re-told. Sometimes, when a question of unusual importance arose or a new enterprise was to be undertaken, there would be a long meeting for prayer and fasting. It was after such a meeting of the Church at Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were solemnly commissioned by laying on of hands for their missionary work (Acts xiii, 3). Whose were the hands laid on the Apostles' heads we are not told. Evidently the action is regarded as the act of the whole community—the whole community as the organ of the Spirit—and it was accompanied by prayer.

Quite early it became usual to have a laying on of hands as a kind of complement to the rite of baptism (Acts viii, 15–17, xix, 5, 6), and not to expect the gift of the Spirit to become fully operative till this had taken place. In the cases mentioned the hands were the hands of St Paul or one of the other Apostles: but in the Acts no definite ruling is given on the point.

Distinct from these apostolic missionaries, who ministered to the whole society, were the *presbyters* or elders who managed the affairs of the local society. At Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia these elders were appointed by Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv, 23); and perhaps this represents the usual procedure, though, again, we have no explicit information.

Owing to the fact that 'over-seeing' was one of the functions of the elders, they were sometimes referred to as *episcopoi*, overseers, inspectors (e.g. Acts xx, 28, where the

[1] E.g. Acts xx, 35.

R.V. text reads 'bishops').[1] One of them, no doubt, would preside at the 'breaking of bread', and when such a presidency became a permanency, there in germ would be the bishop of later days. Moreover, when the original house-church in a city grew too large for any one house and other house-churches were formed from it, the senior presbyter of the original congregation would be looked up to by all the Christians in the city. Gradually his office would become more and more distinct and fixed till he was regarded as *the* episcopos of the place.

This developement took place quickly in some places, e.g. Asia Minor; slowly in others, e.g. Syria. James 'the eldest male of the Messianic House' held from the first a unique position of authority in Jerusalem resembling that of a Caliph almost as much as that of a bishop (in the later sense of the term).[2]

There were of course other duties connected with each church, particularly those relating to the care of the poor and to discipline. At the 'breaking of bread' it was customary to set aside portions for the poor and to raise contributions for them; and in the larger churches, at all events, this work of ministration was entrusted to ministrants, *deacons*, and eventually gave rise to a second set of officials whose duty it was to assist the presbyters in these and other respects.

[1] Those who saw the performance of the 'Birds' of Aristophanes at Cambridge a few years ago will remember the little *episcopos* (inspector of taxes) who came skipping upon the stage in a white hat.

[2] See B. H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church*, pp. 40, 73.

'The Church was an organism alive and growing—changing its organisation to meet changing needs... the system of government varied from church to church.... Uniformity was a later developement.'[1]

As to discipline: there was considerable need of it as there is still in the young churches of the Mission field.

In some of the great mass-movement Churches of India it was found necessary, for the honour of the Christian name, and in order to check the litigiousness of their members, not only to constitute Church courts, but to forbid any Christian, under pain of excommunication, to bring a suit before the public court, until the Church had first investigated the case, and granted permission—a permission which was rarely given. And tedious as the work often is, many a missionary has found it worth while to spend long hours with trusted representatives of the Church in judging of disputes between Christians, and, in that way, not only to settle such disputes, but to help to form Christian standards of morality.[2]

St Paul was faced with a very similar difficulty at Corinth (1 Cor. vi, 1–8).

Other difficulties arose owing to the influence of heathen environment with its lower ethical standards. The effect of the surrounding moral atmosphere tells in a subtle way, as missionaries still testify, even upon experienced Christians, and they have constantly to be on their guard against moral enervation and lassitude. Hence St Paul's frequent warnings against fornication. Moreover, it was felt that to go where idolatry was was to go out of that sphere where Christ ruled and protected His own, and so to incur spiritual danger and specially danger from the demons who lurked

[1] Streeter, *op. cit.* p. 261. [2] S. Cave, *op. cit.* p. 195.

behind the idols. Similarly Dr Cave records[1] that 'in the South India United Church in Travancore, the Indian members of Church Councils would insist on the suspension from Church membership of those who attended the marriage festivals, even of relatives who were Hindus, because there idolatrous rites would be practised, and so their souls imperilled'. How far one could safely go in social intercourse with one's heathen neighbours was often a difficult question. While St Paul deprecated overscrupulousness he laid down as a determining principle considerateness for others. 'If meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble' (1 Cor. viii, 13; cf. Phil. iv, 5).

We must pass on to note the close connexion between the life of the local community and the life of the Church as a whole. Apostles were recognized as leaders of the whole Church and were welcome everywhere: and the term Apostle[2] includes not only the twelve and St Paul but James, Barnabas, and others (Rom. xvi, 7). Prophets too, that is persons who gave special evidence of being possessed by the Spirit, were similarly welcomed. And not

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 147.

[2] The Jews apparently used the term for the commissioners (men of standing and authority) who went from Jerusalem to collect the Temple tribute from the Jewish Dispersion and were in many ways an important link between this Dispersion and the capital. Similarly the Christian Apostles were a link between the Christian Dispersion and the Mother Church of Jerusalem (evidently so regarded in the Acts, and cf. Rom. xv, 25–27). See Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, II, 314 ff. Eng. Tr. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*.

only that: the ordinary Christian was sure of the warmest and friendliest reception in any Christian society anywhere all over the world (Acts xxi, 3–6, xxviii,[1] 13–15).

Christians moving from one place to another regularly brought with them notes of introduction. What could be more sincere and beautiful than the following (one of St Paul's): 'I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreae: that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a succourer of many, and of mine own self' (Rom. xvi, 1, 2).

The local churches raised contributions not only for their own poor, and not only for their beloved Apostles (Phil. iv, 10, 11, 14–17), but for the poor in Jerusalem (Rom. xv, 26–28; 2 Cor. viii, ix). So wide was the interpretation given to the law of Christ, 'Bear ye one another's burdens' (Gal. vi, 2).

It must be added that, if the Christians were poor, they were not yet generally persecuted, at all events not on the large scale. The authorities took them to be a species of Jew, and Judaism was an allowed religion in the Empire. The Jews themselves were often hostile (Acts xiii, 45, 50, xiv, 4, 5, 19, xvii, 5, 13; 1 Thes. ii, 14, 15),[2] and in most

[1] Note that Apii Forum is forty, and Tres Tabernae thirty, miles from Rome.

[2] Suetonius' language about the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by the Emperor Claudius (Claudius xxv, 4), 'since the Jews constantly made tumults "impulsore Chresto"', suggests that these disturbances probably arose through conflicts connected with Christianity.

cities there were busybodies and a rabble who might from time to time trouble the meek.

In conclusion we turn back for a moment to the individual. 'The beginning of wisdom', said Epictetus the Stoic philosopher, 'is the finding of a standard.' The Christian had found a new standard of conduct, of thought and action, in Christ and His society; and with it a new motive, a new affection, a new enthusiasm, which shattered their mental and spiritual complexes and brought them inward freedom and peace—the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. viii, 21). No doubt they had their lapses and their faults. Their ideas were in many respects crude like their neighbours, and sometimes they slipped very disagreeably into priggishness. Yet taking them as a whole they give us the impression of patches of colour in a world now grown somewhat grey. Their earliest pictures in the catacombs at Rome do not belie them: all merry as they are with garlands and little cupids and birds of gay plumage.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

J. B. Lightfoot. *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry* in his commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians. (Macmillan, 1868.)

A. C. Headlam. *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion.* (John Murray, 1920.)

S. Cave. *The Gospel of St Paul.* A re-interpretation in the light of the religion of his age and modern missionary experience. (Hodder and Stoughton, 1928.)

B. H. Streeter. *The Primitive Church.* (Macmillan, 1929.)

CHAPTER TEN

FROM ST PAUL TO ST JOHN: THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

IN the second half of the first century A.D. Christianity was beginning here and there to percolate into the upper classes of society. In A.D. 57 a courageous lady, Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the first Roman general in Britain, was accused of 'foreign superstition'[1] and handed over to the judgement of her husband by whom she was acquitted. It is not improbable that this means that she was a Christian and that her husband connived at it.

Early in A.D. 96 the Emperor Domitian suddenly put to death his first cousin T. Flavius Clemens on the charge of atheism and Jewish superstition. Evidence has been collected to shew that his wife Domitilla was secretly an adherent to Christianity and that he himself was at least an inquirer; and it would seem that more than one aristocratic family were interesting themselves in the Christian religion.[2] Hence arose a demand for Christian literature for educated circles.

St Mark's Gospel may have appeared at Rome some years earlier[3] after the death of St Peter and been intended to preserve the stories he used to tell of the Lord's

[1] Tacitus, *Ann.* XIII, 32.
[2] Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 535.
[3] Probably in the decade A.D. 60–70.

ministry in Galilee and of His final visit to Jerusalem. But this Gospel was written by someone who apparently thought in Aramaic or at all events was quite unfamiliar with the niceties of literary Greek.

It was St Luke who first addressed himself to the task of presenting a narrative of Christian origins in a style that would be attractive to persons of rank and culture. In his first volume, he shews how Jesus, in a life that realized the Greek ideal of the good-and-beautiful, revealed Himself as a world-saviour: and in his second, how the religion He founded started on its course as a world-religion. Incidentally he made it clear how right and indeed inevitable it had been that Christianity should supersede Judaism, and how from the point of view of the loyal Roman citizen there was nothing to be said against it.[1]

Now, as we saw in Chapter IV, the chief subjects in higher education were rhetoric and philosophy; and the questions which would interest educated people were such questions as these: Is Christianity one of a number of religions open to a wise man's choice, or is it *the* religion standing absolutely by itself? Who is Christ, and what kind of being is He? Two books in the New Testament are designed to answer these questions: the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Fourth Gospel. St Paul himself had, as we shall see, been moving towards the answers which these books suggest.

Who the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was GOD alone knows, as the great Alexandrian scholar Origen said. Up to the end of the nineteenth century scholars were

[1] See above, Chapter VII, p. 206.

agreed that the readers contemplated in the first instance were Jewish Christians. Much may still be said in support of the view that the purpose of the writer was to encourage those Christians in Palestine, and perhaps elsewhere, who, because they were of Jewish nationality when the Jewish rebellion was on the point of breaking out (A.D. 66), were tempted to throw in their lot again with their fellow countrymen. But to go back from Christianity to Judaism was (the Epistle insisted) not to be thought of. It would be to forsake the substance for the shadow. No: their eyes had been opened by faith to see the eternal realities, and this vision would strengthen and support them to endure whatever conflict and suffering might be before them.

Whether, however, the writer actually had such readers in view or not, his theme is clear, and he sets himself to develope it in the manner approved by the best rhetorical schools. His theme is the absoluteness of the Christian religion; and he brings out his point by exhibiting the contrast between Christianity and Judaism.

The text of his homily—for that is what the Epistle to the Hebrews really is, an early Christian homily beautifully composed and illuminated with illustrations obtained by reading into certain Old Testament passages[1] a subtle allegory—might have been taken from St Paul. St Paul had said 'we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal' (2 Cor. iv, 18), and he had referred to certain observances

[1] E.g. Ps. cx, 4; Gen. xiv, 18–20.

enjoined by the Jewish Law as 'a shadow of the things to come' (Col. ii, 17). These are the thoughts which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes up and develops. In the law he too finds 'a shadow of the good things to come' (x, 1). All its regulations have to do with types of realities which themselves belong to the unseen and eternal world. His conception of that world has its roots in Plato's doctrine of 'ideas', according to which all objects in the visible world are appearances, copies, imperfect and faint many of them, of originals ('ideas' Plato called them) eternally existing in an immaterial and unseen world, which alone has absolute reality. All the procedure laid down in the Jewish Law is a mere reflexion from that ideal world where alone the true high-priesthood can be exercised and the true atonement made. Christ's high-priesthood is an eternal high-priesthood (vii, 17), His offering an eternal offering (x, 12), and the redemption effected by it eternal redemption (ix, 12). Faith is the power that apprehends these and all the other realities which abide. Whatever may be the succession of appearances in the here-and-now of space and time, these eternal unseen realities remain unshaken: and the faith that apprehends them is the secret of noble and courageous living (xi).

Evidently the writer has advanced far beyond the conception of Christ as a Jewish Messiah, however exalted. He is God's Son (i, 5), 'for whom are all things, and through whom are all things' (ii, 10), whom the angels worship (i, 6). Parallels to such language can, of course, be found in St Paul. While all Christians are children of God by adoption and through possessing the Spirit of God

(Rom. viii, 14–17), Christ has been declared to be the Son of God in a signal manner by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. i, 4)[1]; and that is above all what St Paul held Him to be (Gal. ii, 20, etc.). He is 'the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist' (Col. i, 15–17).[2] 'In the name of Jesus', every knee shall bow, 'of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth' (Phil. ii, 10).

But who then is Christ? Is He a superior arch-angel or a second god? Speculations about His person seem to have been rife among some of the Greek Christians, for example at Colossae.[3]

If St Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the other Christian teachers had not all been deeply committed to Monotheism they would probably have found an easy though superficial definition of the nature of Christ. He would have been accepted simply as a god, by an obvious extension of the principle laid down by

[1] Some scholars have seen in an expression of this kind (cf. Acts ii, 36) a trace of a primitive view that Christ too was 'adopted' at His resurrection, or according to another theory at His baptism (see e.g. the 'Western' reading in Lk. iii, 22). It is clear, however, that St Paul himself did not hold that view. See especially Phil. ii, 6.

[2] Cf. also 1 Cor. viii, 6.

[3] Note especially the term '*pleroma*', (Col. i, 19, ii, 9), a speculative term which played a great part in the later theorizing of the so-called 'Gnostics'.

Aristotle:[1] 'If there exists in a state an individual so pre-eminent in virtue that neither the virtue nor political capacity of all the other citizens is comparable with his..., he should not be regarded as a member of the state at all. For he will be wronged if treated as an equal when he is thus unequal in virtue and political capacity. Such a man should be rated as a god among men'.

But the early Christians were too well grounded in the Monotheism of the later prophets of the Old Testament to use the term *god* in this way. St Paul indeed does say that before His coming into the world Christ already had the essential attributes of GOD,[2] and he applies to Christ passages from the Old Testament in which the word 'lord' occurs and refers to GOD, without any qualification.[3] To use a modern phrase: 'for St Paul Christ had the value of God'.[4] How to express this[5] and remain a Monotheist was

[1] *Politics* III, 13 (1284 *a*).

[2] 'Being in the form of God', Phil. ii, 6. In connexion with this famous passage it must be noted that 'It was an established habit of the Jewish mind to assert pre-existence of objects and of men who were specially representative of God'—Moses, the Temple, the Tabernacle, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Law, and the Sabbath (cf. the human personality, Ps. cxxxix, 15, 16), C. A. Scott, *Christianity according to St Paul*, p. 270. (Cambridge.)

[3] See C. A. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 253. Cf. Joel ii, 32 with Rom. x, 13; Is. xxviii, 16 with Rom. x, 11: and notice how phrases like 'call upon the name of the Lord' (1 Cor. i, 2), and 'the day of the Lord' (1 Thes. v, 2) are used with reference to Christ.

[4] C. A. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 277.

[5] With regard to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit see Note 1 at the end of the chapter. Less attention was paid to it, and its developement was slower.

the problem: and in truth the problem remains, and is likely to remain, still unsolved. Christian thought, however, has moved toward a solution,[1] and it is the aim of the rest of this chapter to trace that movement from St Paul to St John.

In the passage quoted above from the Epistle to the Colossians (i, 15–17) it will be noticed that St Paul speaks of Christ as the image of the invisible GOD (cf. 2 Cor. iv, 4) and as being GOD's agent in Creation: and this reminds us of the fine passage in which the divine Wisdom is personified in the book of Wisdom (vii): 'She that is the artificer of all things taught me, even wisdom....' 'For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, And an unspotted mirror of the working of God, And an image of his goodness'.

The very word 'effulgence', *radiance*,[2] is used together with 'image' in Heb. i, 2, 3: 'God...hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power....'[3]

[1] In certain circles, especially those which were strongly Jewish and conservative, this movement was greatly retarded and eventually took a rather different direction. Thus we get various kinds of 'Ebionites' who came to be regarded by the main body of Christians as heretics. On these see Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, Chapter v. (Methuen.)

[2] Not found in the Old Testament and only here in the Apocrypha.

[3] Wisdom vii, viii and Proverbs viii should be read in this connexion.

The developement of this conception of the divine Wisdom took place at a time when Hebrew thought was profoundly impressed with the unspeakable majesty of the Almighty and laid stress upon His transcendence, that is, His existing above and apart from the visible universe, not subject in any way to its limitations. Thus not even His name was to be mentioned; and in fact GOD is only referred to by periphrasis in the deeply religious history of 1 Maccabees. GOD then, in His absolute nature, being removed from the world, it was necessary somehow in thought to bring Him back into relation with it; and this was done poetically in Proverbs viii and the Book of Wisdom by personifying that divine attribute of Wisdom which is suggested by the order so plainly observable in creation: 'She reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, And sweetly doth she order all that is' (Wisdom viii, 1).

A still more vivid realization of the ordering process actually operating in the world, due largely to Greek influence and to some extent the result of the remarkable scientific discoveries of men like Hipparchus of Nicaea (161–126 B.C.), who could foretell eclipses and calculate the length of the lunar month to within a second, led to a fuller developement and to a change of term. 'Wisdom', which can only be the name of an attribute, is replaced in the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo by the term 'Logos', which may mean both 'Reason' and 'Word'. The 'Logos' of GOD may therefore be regarded, on the one hand, as a divine attribute, and, on the other hand, as something proceeding from GOD, going out and operating

in the world; as a word proceeds out of the mouth of a man. The conception of such a divine power immanent in the world and producing order, an order exhibited in Man as, so far, its highest expression, was developed by the Stoics and was taken over by Philo; and by him brought into relation with the transcendent GOD of later Judaism. Philo could, and did very extensively, quote Scripture to enforce his theory: 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made' (Ps. xxxiii, 6) and so on. To ask whether the Logos is conceived of as personal or impersonal is to ask a question which admits of no precise answer because the whole modern conception of personality is a later developement.[1] It stands, at all events, for GOD: not for GOD-transcendent, dwelling-in-light-unapproachable, GOD, whom no man hath seen nor can see (1 Tim. vi, 16), but for GOD-immanent, GOD-active, GOD shaping the world according to His purpose.

From what has already been said it is clear that St Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews are moving in the direction of this conception of the Logos in their attempt to interpret the person of Christ. But it was reserved for St John to take the final step[2] (Jn. i, 1–18).

St John goes back to the beginning. The world we know has its origin in a plan and purpose of which the existing order is the outcome, but as yet only a partial expression. All things come into being in accordance with this purpose,

[1] A developement due largely to reflexion by Christians on their spiritual experience.

[2] On the authorship and composition of the Fourth Gospel see Note 2 at the end of the chapter.

and apart from it was not anything made that has been made. 'It is this purpose that gives life to the whole, and is the light in what otherwise would be darkness. Darkness still broods among men wherever this purpose-light of things is not discerned, and their life is not true life unless its trend is to the furthering of the ordering process: knowing the design and helping to fashion things after it. Every man that is born into the world has within him as his own a germ of the life and a glimmering of the light'.[1] There is no man without this factor of human nature. In the case of some the germ did not grow and the light did not lead: but others became conscious of the purpose and followed the light and lived the life: the saints of the Old Testament for example.

And now in Jesus this purpose was realized, or as St John puts it 'enfleshed', embodied. 'The design was seen in its plenitude, full of grace and truth—commending itself by its own appeal to men as the truth about themselves—in a human life of quality and achievement unattained till then.'[2] The process had been all along one of divine ordering: and it had produced, not a stranger from another world, but Jesus, among His own, exhibiting to them in Himself reality, what their life was and meant.

And so St John turns again to the stories of the life of

[1] Cf. Prov. xx, 27: 'The Spirit of man is the candle of the Lord'—*lit by God, lighting to God*, said Benjamin Whichcote, the Cambridge Platonist.

[2] I am following the exposition of the Prologue of St John given in a sermon before the University of Cambridge on May 1st, 1927, by Professor J. F. Bethune-Baker.

Jesus in the light of his new knowledge as to who He really was. He chooses the most revealing of them and paints them again that we may see their meaning, this key now being in our hand. And what we see is not merely a human life in the here-and-now of space and time. We see what true life is, Eternal life, into which we too can enter even in the here-and-now, by sharing His spirit and adopting His attitude to life's business.

'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever' (1 Jn. ii, 17).

NOTE 1. *On the developement of the doctrine of the Spirit*

The term *spirit* was originally as we have seen (Chapter IV), both in Hebrew and in Greek, a term denoting a subtle air-like substance in motion. It gradually lost its material connotation; but Philo did not use the word as we might have expected. That was very likely because it still retained too many materialistic associations. By the first century of our era, however, it had come to denote a kind of energy or force or vital power, and especially 'the vital power which belongs to the Divine Being and is seen to be operative in the world and in man'.[1]

The early Christians attributed the wonderful experience which came to them in the Christian fellowship to the activity of that force, that mighty influence 'belonging to God and proceeding from God'.[2]

St Paul recognizes in human beings a spirit[3] which

[1] H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 2. (Macmillan.) [2] Acts ii, cf. Rom. v, 5; 1 Cor. xii, 13.
[3] 1 Thes. v, 23; 1 Cor. v, 5.

manifests itself in mind and conscience (Rom. ii, 15, vii, 25), akin to and receptive of the Spirit of GOD. Indeed in 1 Cor. ii, 11 he argues from the human to the divine personality and says that there is in GOD a region of inner personal consciousness corresponding to spirit in man. GOD's Spirit quickens man's spirit and only so is man's spirit regnant in him in such a way that he deserves to be called spiritual.[1]

Now St Paul maintained the equivalence of the Spirit of GOD with the Spirit of Christ and even with the Spiritual Christ Himself. 'This led to a transference to the Spirit of the character, qualities, and purposes which had been seen in Jesus.'[2] So 'St Paul conceived of a Being, immaterial, universally extended, immanent in human experience and characterized by those qualities of self-consciousness, purpose, and self-direction which we sum up as constituting personality';[3] although, strictly speaking, as we have already observed, the whole modern conception of personality is a later developement.

In St John the doctrine of the Spirit is carried very little further than this. As the Logos in the beginning was with GOD and proceeding from GOD became incarnate, so when the incarnate Logos is glorified (Jn. vii, 39, xvi, 7), there comes the Spirit, the Paraclete, and in the coming of the Paraclete Christ Himself comes (Jn. xiv, 16–18). And this is the coming that matters, and the idea of a spectacular return on the clouds of heaven falls into the background.

[1] See G. G. Findlay on 1 Cor. ii (Expositor's Greek Testament).

[2] C. A. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 258.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 144.

Thus, already in the New Testament we find the elements out of which theologians have built up the doctrine of the Trinity. That doctrine as ordinarily taught needs revision. But this is a large subject which obviously cannot be entered into here. For suggestions with regard to it I would refer to such a work as Dr Wheeler Robinson's *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*.[1]

Note 2. *On the authorship and composition of the Fourth Gospel*

The purpose of the writer of the Fourth Gospel is to deepen the spiritual experience[2] of the second generation of Christians by bringing out for them the inner meaning of the story of Jesus. 'These things are written...that believing ye may have life in his name' (xx, 31). 'He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life' (v, 24). 'This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ' (xvii, 3).

Upon that story[3] the Fourth Evangelist pondered often and long in the light of his own convictions and devotional

[1] Note especially Chapter XII (and the suggestion on p. 281).

[2] In illustration of this Note 3 is added on the Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel.

[3] As he had received it, partly from the Synoptic Gospels Mark and Luke (there is no sufficient evidence that he used Matthew), and partly from traditions handed down in Asia Minor as coming from the Beloved Disciple whom he may have known personally, whom, at all events, he felt to be his guide and master.

experiences. And there are many indications, as the late Baron von Hügel has pointed out, that he was a mystic. He heard with the prophet's inward ear: very likely he saw in mystic vision.

> What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
> And named them in the Gospel I have writ.[1]

The appendix to the Gospel identifies the author as the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' (xxi, 24). But this is a later insertion, and the statement would be sufficiently accounted for if we supposed that the Gospel was written by a disciple who had 'come to conceive a mystical veneration for the aged Apostle who had leaned on the Lord's breast at the Last Supper'.[2] This Apostle can hardly be any other than John the son of Zebedee.

It is a tempting suggestion that John the son of Zebedee is the author of the Apocalypse: that his reverent and admiring disciple is the other John named by Papias, John the Elder: and that John the Elder is the author not only of the Gospel but also of the three Epistles that bear the name of John.[3] And it is interesting to note that this is actually the hypothesis adopted and defended in the most recent commentary on the Gospel, that of the late Dr Bernard published posthumously (1928).

[1] Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

[2] Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 433. (Macmillan.)

[3] Note that the author of 2 Jn. speaks of himself as 'the elder'; and so does the author of 3 Jn.

NOTE 3. *On the Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel.*

St John does not feel it necessary to repeat the account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper already given in Mark; but it is clear that in Chapter VI he has the Christian rite in mind. Indeed he seems to have in view the attitude towards the Eucharistic bread represented in Ignatius' *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*:[1] 'the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins, which also the Father of his goodness raised up'. Christians in the circle known to Ignatius had evidently gone considerably beyond St Paul in identifying the bread itself in some mysterious way with the flesh of Christ.

Read carefully and as a whole, Jn. vi certainly suggests that to the writer feeding upon Christ is a bigger and wider thing than merely the receiving of the Eucharistic bread and wine. The connexion of thought may be traced as follows. First comes the story of the feeding of a multitude with loaves and fishes after the Lord 'had given thanks'[2] (1–14). This suggests the subject of the discourse which begins *v.* 26, leading up to 'My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven' (*v.* 32)...'I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst' (*v.* 35)—not he that 'eateth' but 'he that cometh', 'he that believeth', strongly suggesting that in the writer's view coming and believing were what

[1] Chapter VI—written (*c.* A.D. 115) possibly about the same time as the Gospel, certainly not more than twenty years or so later.

[2] Εὐχαριστήσας, V, 11; cf. V, 23.

was meant by the figure of eating.[1] Similarly 'beholding' and 'believing' are stressed in *v.* 40 and associated with the gift of 'eternal life'. Language like that of Ignatius is not used till we reach *v.* 51: 'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world'—the same promise of eternal life being here attached to 'eating the bread'. The Jews object (*v.* 52): but 'Ignatian' phraseology is only repeated and emphasized (*vv.* 53–58); until, indeed, the disciples murmur, 'This is a hard saying; who can hear it?' (*v.* 60). The answer to them is 'Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?' (*vv.* 61, 62). In other words, 'you must be prepared for things hard to understand': and then immediately the Lord adds 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words[2] that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life. But there are some of you that believe not' (*vv.* 63, 64). Surely the meaning is 'you must not take all this about eating and drinking literally: the life-giving force is the spirit; and the sayings of the Word made flesh—they are spirit and they are life'.[3]

'Current language about the Eucharist is deliberately

[1] 'I am the bread of life' being figurative, just as 'I am the good shepherd', 'I am the light of the world', 'I am the door'.

[2] Origen noted the thought here expressed (Hom. in Num. xvi; Migne, *P.G.* XII, p. 701): 'We are said to drink the blood of Christ, not only in the use of the Sacraments, but also when we receive his words'.

[3] Professor J. M. Creed, 'Sacraments in the Fourth Gospel' in the *Modern Churchman*, Oct. 1926, p. 368.

accepted.[1] The Evangelist is anxious to justify and explain the sacramental rites of the Church. But he wishes to carry his readers beyond the rite to the inward and personal union with Christ which the rite at once symbolizes and mediates.'

'We are left with the positive affirmation that the flesh and blood of the Son of Man give life, and explanation that the life comes, not from the flesh in itself, but from the Spirit of the exalted Son of Man.'[2]

[1] In justice to Ignatius it must be added that he probably did not intend that his language should be tied down to its literal meaning. Elsewhere he speaks of the Gospel as 'the flesh of Jesus' (Philad. v), faith 'as the flesh of Christ' (Trall, VIII), and love as His blood (Rom. vii).

[2] J. M. Creed, *ibid.* p. 369. Professor Creed adds: 'We seem to find a similar attitude towards the sacrament of Baptism in the discourse with Nicodemus. There is the same unqualified statement of the Church's faith: "Amen, Amen, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God". But the words which follow dwell upon the unseen operations of the Spirit'. The reference to the water is quietly dropped. Professor Creed's essay is recommended for further study.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

Editions of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

A. S. Peake. (Century Bible.)

J. Moffatt. (International Critical Commentary, 1924.)

A. Nairne. *The Epistle of Priesthood.* (T. and T. Clark, 1913.)

On the Fourth Gospel:

F. C. Burkitt. *The Gospel History and its Transmission.* (T. and T. Clark, 1906.)

B. H. Streeter. *The Four Gospels.* Part III. (Macmillan, 1924.)

A. E. Brooke. *St John.* (In Peake's One-Volume Commentary.)

J. H. Bernard. *St John.* (International Critical Commentary, 1928.)

E. F. Scott. *The Fourth Gospel, its Purpose and Theology.* (2nd ed.) (T. and T. Clark, 1908.)

J. E. Carpenter. *The Johannine Writings.* (Constable, 1927.)

EARLY TRADITIONS ABOUT JESUS

By

J. F. BETHUNE-BAKER

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT THE GOSPELS ARE AND HOW THEY CAME TO BE

We have seen something of the Church actually in being—the people of whom it was composed—what Christians thought and did, how they lived—all that can be inferred from the special subjects chosen out by the missionaries who had won them over to their own belief.

We do not know how much they all knew or told about the life of Jesus, and it seems probable that their attention was fixed on Him more as they believed He was then, in the heavens, seated on the right hand of God, than as He had been on earth. Though He had lived on earth, it was what He had become, what they felt He was to them in their lives day by day, and what He was to shew Himself in the future, that interested them most. He was God's Son and His Christ. He was already reigning, not only in the heavens above, but also deep in their own hearts by His influence on them; and they believed that He was to come again to the world visibly and act as judge and establish the reign of God on earth. To men and women who believed this, the wonder was that He had ever really lived in the world as a man, like one of us—that He had been born, and learned things, and played, and had a trade, and been tired and anxious and troubled, not altogether successful in what He wanted to do, and at last 'brought to the gallows'.

The wonder was how one who had so high a place in GOD's purpose for the world could have lived so lowly a life and suffered as Jesus did.

Yet all this was part of the good news about GOD and Man that was at the root of the life of the first Christians; and from the beginning stories were told about Jesus and passed about from one to another, to shew what He was like in His lifetime. There were anecdotes of His doings and His ways of looking at things, character sketches (some of them thumb-nail sketches in their proportion) and striking sayings, which gradually were collected together.

We do not know when collections of this kind began to be made, or how they were made. Probably some of the earliest disciples made for their own use a kind of anthology or 'golden treasury' of sayings that specially appealed to them.

We know that this was done at a later time by Christians living in Egypt in the second century, for a few years ago out of the rubbish heaps of their houses bits of little books written in Greek on the papyrus rolls, of which books were made, were dug up, and some of them were found to contain a number of short sentences beginning with 'Jesus says'. Only one of these sayings is exactly the same as any that are in our Gospels; but some of them may have been copied from one of these early collections; or they may have been 'good sayings' which the writer of the little book had heard repeated, like the one which we only know because St Paul is said to have quoted it to the elders at Ephesus, bidding them 'remember the words of the Lord

Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts xx, 35).

Teachers, too, would find it convenient not to have to depend on memory only for their anecdotes and stories, but to make collections of stories in writing as well as of sayings. These they would use in their missionary work, now about one thing and now about another, and those that were found most useful for the purpose of winning converts and answering their questions would survive. When St Luke, many years later, composed his Gospel, he says in his preface (Lk. i, 1–4) that by the time he wrote there had been many attempts made to draw up accounts of what had happened, and that he himself had undertaken his task so that converts might know for certain about the things in which they had been instructed. Probably some of the narratives to which he refers were little more than such collections of anecdotes and sayings. A parallel might be found in the case of St Francis of Assisi. Very soon after his death a collection of stories about him was made.

Perhaps one of the first of all these little 'Christian' books, out of which our Gospels grew, was a collection of passages from the Old Testament (which for some time was the Christians' only 'Bible')—passages which were believed to point to Jesus and find fulfilment in Him. Peter in his early sermons, reported in Acts (ii, 25 and iii, 22), spins out his theme from Old Testament texts. Probably some such collection was used by St Paul and it or one like it is at the back of the Gospel according to St Matthew with its constant references to the fulfilment of Scripture.

None of these earliest collections, whether of sayings or of stories about Jesus, has survived. No doubt they contained stories of varying degrees of historical and religious value. The later 'apocryphal' gospels shew that there was a kind of underworld of early Christianity in which the love of the marvellous ran riot, and stories about Jesus were believed which are to us incredible and wholly unworthy to be connected with Him. The best of the earliest collections of sayings and stories were, we may be sure, for the most part, incorporated in our Gospels,[1] and then superseded by these larger books with their fuller narrative. It is a sign of the high religious level of the main body of the early Church that the Gospels which were thus selected are as free from unworthy stories as they are.

Nor again has any early collection of passages from the Old Testament been preserved, though the use of such collections by early writers in defence of Christianity can be traced, and a collection with the title 'Testimonies' (or 'Evidences') has come down to us among the works of Cyprian who was bishop of Carthage in the middle of the third century.

[1] No doubt there were in circulation isolated stories equally good which never got into our Gospels, like the story of the man working on the sabbath to whom Jesus said: 'Man, if thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou, but if thou knowest not, accursed'—which is found in one of the great manuscripts (D) after Lk. vi, 4. Another of these floating stories is the one about the adulteress, which has been preserved by being inserted in the Gospel according to St John (vii, 53–viii, 11), though it is absent from all Greek manuscripts of the Gospel earlier than the eighth century except D.

Our first 'Gospel', that of St Mark, occupies a position intermediate between the earliest collections of sayings and stories and the full narratives of the Gospels of St Luke and St Matthew. The heart of it is the story of the Passion. A third of the whole Gospel is taken up with a narrative of the doings and sayings of the last week of the life of Jesus. Its main purpose was not to be a 'life' of Jesus, or even a 'biography', but to trace back the Christian movement to its beginnings in the religious revival of John 'the Baptizer': to shew Jesus as the successor of John and the Hebrew prophets, in line with them and the hopes of Israel (as figured in the Old Testament). But in doing this the author has a scheme in mind. He gives a series of pictures of Jesus set in a kind of framework of a life, shewing His early hopes and success, the opposition to Him, and the end; and he sets it out apparently as a year's crowded work, bringing stories and parables and sayings together to illustrate his theme.

It is thus not intended to be a life or a history so much as the announcement of a Gospel—a good news, not only brought by Jesus Christ, but about Him, of which He is as it were the centre. It is meant to describe a plan of salvation for men, which goes back to the promises of the Old Testament and has its fulfilment in Jesus, the Messiah.

It gives us a point of view of Jesus that probably represents an impression of what He was in his lifetime produced on someone, who had stories told by an actual follower to go on, but had not himself been present. The stories had been told often, and possibly the editor of the Gospel, besides providing the historical framework for

them, added to them some touches of his own. It is possible that if we had been present at some of the incidents we should not have given quite the same account of them. But we have nothing earlier by which we can test Mark's accounts.

Many scholars think it probable that Mark had a Roman audience in view when he wrote his Gospel, and that he aimed at painting a picture of Jesus which would appeal to Romans.

Thus he depicts Jesus as the unconventional Jewish prophet, who overrode the petty rules which barred Romans from accepting the Jewish religion.

Again, in a world which went in very real dread of evil spirits, he shews Jesus as the demon-conquering deliverer.

And, again, if this view is right, the Roman public for which he wrote was one that expected nothing from the official religion of the State, and had turned for religious consolation to cults of oriental origin, in which the founder was believed by his own physical sufferings to have won for himself the favour of the gods, and a blessed immortality after death for all who were initiated into the rites he had appointed. So Mark presents the picture of the suffering Son of GOD, greater than any of the deified heroes of these oriental religions because the appeal His sufferings make is not so much physical as spiritual and moral.

There are no stories in Mark about the birth and early life of Jesus. As 'the beginning of the Gospel' there is set before us the strange figure of John, a prophet living in the

desert and preaching a new baptism which is described as one of 'repentance' with a view to the 'remission of sins'. We are introduced to Jesus as already a grown man, caught by the religious revival of this John 'the Baptizer' and coming to him to be baptized. We are told nothing of any of the hopes and fears, or thoughts and plans, of Jesus in His youth and early manhood, which must have led up to the decisive moment when He responded to the appeal of the preaching of the Baptizer and so enrolled Himself as one of John's disciples. And even after His baptism and the Temptation in the Wilderness, according to this Gospel, it was not until John had been arrested and put in prison that Jesus began His own preaching and ministry. John had regarded himself as simply the herald of one mightier than he was. He aimed at shaking people out of their easy-going ways and making them conscious of their religious needs, so that they might be ready to receive the greater prophet when He came. And when Jesus first came before the public, He seemed to accept for Himself the position of John's successor and pointed back to the preparatory ministry of John in the words, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand' (Mk. i, 15).

The later Gospels (Luke and Matthew), both of which use Mark as one of the main sources of their narratives, and between them include nearly everything that is in Mark, aim at supplementing Mark's account of the Life by a genealogical tree and by traditions of the family of Jesus and His birth and early childhood, so as to give what was expected in a biography; and they add fresh incidents and sayings and teaching. The authors of them write in better

Greek style than Mark, and in what they take over from him they both make a good many little changes of words and expressions to produce a more literary effect. They also save space for their new matter by shortening some of Mark's picturesque accounts of incidents; and sometimes they alter his accounts for another reason—because they seemed to them to give a wrong impression of what Jesus said or did or thought about Himself, or else of what other people thought about Him and of what they ought to think. Matthew does this more than Luke.

For example, in the story of the Rich Young Ruler (Mk. x, 17 ff.; Lk. xviii, 18 ff.; Mt. xix, 16 ff.), Mark (Luke too) gives the question as 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' and the reply of Jesus as 'Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God'. It is possible that Jesus may have had a deeper meaning, but His words seem to repudiate the title 'good' as addressed to Him, and Matthew changes the question to 'Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' and the answer to 'Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good'.

Again, in the story of the Rejection at Nazareth (Mk. vi, 1–6; Mt. xiii, 54–58), Mark says that Jesus 'could not do any mighty work' there, beyond healing a few sick folk, and that He was surprised at their lack of faith; thus implying that He tried and failed. But Matthew changes Mark's 'could not do any' into 'did not do many', and implies that their lack of faith was the reason why He would not do many such works (Mk. iii, 19–30; Lk. xi, 14–23; Mt. xii, 22–32).

Again, Mark records an occasion (Mk. iii, 19–30) when a crowd had come to hear Jesus at an early stage in His ministry and His friends went out to bring Him home, 'for they said, He is beside himself'.[1]

Neither Luke nor Matthew (Lk. xi, 14–23; Mt. xii, 22–32) thought fit to record the episode which Mark narrates as an introduction to his account of the charge brought by the scribes that it was by the help of Beelzebub, or Satan, the prince of the demons, that Jesus was able to cast out demons. Instead, they both link this charge with a particular case of the cure of a demoniac by Jesus, and they omit the insinuation that Jesus Himself was out of His mind which Mark records (iii, 22, 'He hath Beelzebub', i.e. He is possessed of a demon, and again, verse 30, 'they said, He hath an unclean spirit').

In another case it is only Luke who leaves out a story that has always been difficult to understand and is more like some of the stories in the apocryphal gospels. It is the story of the cursing of the fig-tree which is told both by Mark (xi, 12–14 and 20–25) and by Matthew (xxi, 18–22). Luke, however, instead of it, records in another place the

[1] The passage has usually been understood to mean that it was His friends who thought He was 'out of his mind'. The Greek words used are like our phrase 'his people', and immediately after his account of the incident Mark (verse 31) mentions 'his brethren and his mother' as coming and calling Him. But it is possible that the phrase 'they said' is used in Mark of a general rumour (like *on disait*), 'people were saying'; and, if so, His own family may only have come to see what was the matter.

parable of the Barren Fig-Tree—a lesson of mercy and patience, 'giving it another chance'.

These examples shew the kind of freedom that Luke and Matthew allowed themselves, in dealing with the written narratives of Mark which were before them, and in presenting their portraits of Jesus and the details of the history of His life and teaching. Mark's Gospel as a whole is more naïve and primitive in these ways than theirs are. It is like a private venture. Luke's is a much more carefully planned literary composition, and Matthew's has more the air of an ecclesiastical document expressing the official point of view. It was, as a matter of fact, the Gospel most widely used in the early Church.

Luke and Matthew add also, to what is narrated in Mark, accounts of the appearance of Jesus after His death. Just as Mark's Gospel contains no account of the birth and early years of the life of Jesus, so it contains nothing more about the Resurrection than the announcement of the 'young man' 'arrayed in a white robe' to the women at the tomb, that He was risen and that His disciples should see Him in Galilee.[1]

[1] Mark's Gospel ends abruptly at verse 8 of chapter xvi, with the words 'for they were afraid'. It seems to us a strange ending to a Gospel; yet it is certain from the evidence of early manuscripts, and from the style and contents of the verses themselves, that verses 9–20 of this chapter are not the work of Mark but were added later to supply what was felt to be wanting as an end to the Gospel. It is possible, of course, that Mark wrote more and that the original ending of his Gospel, written on a roll of papyrus, was accidentally lost, as the last page of a paper-bound book of our own times may be. If this was the case, Matthew (who

From the point of view of a complete life of Jesus Mark's Gospel lacks ending as it lacks beginning; and Luke and Matthew, in their accounts of the appearances of Jesus, supply what was needed to account for the faith of Christians in Jesus and the existence of the Church; though the differences between their accounts, alike as to place and persons and circumstances, shew that, while a number of stories about the Resurrection were current, there was no fixed tradition as to the exact facts.

As regards all the additions that Luke and Matthew make to what they found in Mark, it must be remembered that, though their Gospels are later, some of the stories they tell may be quite as valuable for the history of Jesus as those in Mark; and the matter common to them both (other than what they derived from Mark), which consists mainly of teaching, may represent or be derived from one of the early collections of sayings and discourses of Jesus referred to above. Such a collection may even have been known by the author of Mark, though he made little

follows Mark closely in his narrative of the Passion) may have had a complete copy before him and the 'lost ending' may be incorporated in Matthew's conclusion. But if so he must have dealt very freely with what he found in Mark. If, for example, Mt. xxviii, 8 is compared with Mk. xvi, 8, it will be seen that Matthew's account of what the women did is directly opposed to Mark's; and the remaining verses of Matthew's Gospel contain so much that is specially characteristic of him, and unlike Mark, that we cannot with any security reconstruct from them the 'lost ending' of Mark. Nor can we hope to recover it from Luke, for he evidently breaks away from Mark (cf. Lk. xxiv, 6 and Mk. xvi, 7) and depends on different traditions for the rest of his Gospel.

use of it. We must draw from this matter common to Matthew and Luke to supplement the picture of Jesus presented in Mark. The book in which this common matter is generally assumed to have existed by itself is called Q, and from Mark and Q together we can reconstruct the picture of Jesus that Christians had before them thirty or forty years after His death.[1]

APPENDIX

There are other theories, e.g. that the Gospel of Matthew was written earlier than the Gospel of Luke, and used by Luke. But this is improbable on many grounds, and one of them is the different way in which the sayings are dealt with in the two Gospels. In Matthew they are to a large extent grouped together under subjects, as in the Sermon on the Mount. In Luke they are scattered all over the Gospel, and in a number of cases Matthew gives a saying twice over—both in connexion with some incident (like Luke) and also in his special collection that makes up the Sermon on the Mount. It seems much more likely that the original collection was haphazard, and first put in order in

[1] Q represents the German *Quelle* (source). It is not certain that such a book ever existed, and all attempts to reconstruct it in detail are precarious. But the hypothesis (1) that there was such a book, in which sayings of Jesus were collected, and with them probably some stories of occasions with which the sayings were connected, and (2) that both Luke and Matthew used it, as they used the Gospel of Mark, accounts for the non-Marcan matter that is common to both of them, and the different uses they make of it, better than any other theory.

Matthew, than that Luke should have had the systematic arrangement of Matthew before him and broken it up in his own Gospel.

We do not know who was the author of this collection of Sayings. It has been supposed that he was the Apostle Matthew, because of a statement made by Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia about the middle of the second century, that Matthew composed 'the Logia' in 'Hebrew' (which means Aramaic—the form of Hebrew spoken in Palestine in the time of Jesus, and normally by Jesus Himself as we see from Mk. v, 41, xv, 34). As this book was composed in Aramaic, it was no doubt intended for the use of Jewish Christians in Palestine, and it has been suggested that Matthew, who under the name of Levi had been a collector of taxes and accustomed to carrying a notebook about with him, was just the man to have jotted down striking sayings at the time and made a book of them after. So, if 'the Logia' means 'the Sayings' or 'Discourses', the Greek translation of this book may have been the source from which both Luke and the author of the Gospel according to Matthew got the sayings they have in common; and because the grouping of sayings in the latter Gospel makes them a more conspicuous part of this Gospel than they are of Luke's, it came to be called by the name of the author of the Book of Sayings on which a large part of it depended.

But it is not at all certain that 'logia' means 'sayings'. The word is used in ordinary Greek in the sense 'announcement', 'oracle'; and it is possible that the whole phrase of Papias does not mean 'sayings of the Lord' but

'announcements about the Lord', and that the book of Matthew to which he refers was a collection, not of what Jesus said, but of what was said about Him in the Old Testament. We know that Christians in early days eagerly searched the Scriptures (that is the Old Testament) for prophecies about the Messiah and any statement or description which they could apply to Jesus when they had become convinced that He was the Messiah, the Lord; and that they attached great importance to the fulfilment of these 'oracles' or 'prophecies' in the life of Jesus as evidence that He really was the Messiah.

Prophecies and their accomplishment figure largely in the Gospel of Matthew—the author sometimes alters Mark's account of an incident in order to bring it into closer conformity with some prophecy. (Compare, for example, Mk. xi, 1–7 with Mt. xxi, 1–7—a case in which the alteration is due to misunderstanding of the Hebrew idiom 'an ass, yea a colt the foal of an ass'.) So, if what Papias says means that the Apostle Matthew made a collection of such 'Messianic' oracles, and this collection was used by the author of the Gospel as the source of one of its most characteristic features, we can understand how the name of Matthew came to be associated with it and it was distinguished from the others as 'the Gospel according to Matthew'.

It is obvious that it is a more Jewish Gospel than the others and that it would appeal to Christians who were of Jewish origin and interested in the Jewish Scriptures and the Mosaic Law, and that it was written for them by one of themselves.

On the other hand, the Gospel of Luke was evidently written by a Christian of non-Jewish origin for his fellow Gentile Christians or other Gentiles. He does not seem to have known Matthew's book on the Oracles, which probably was not translated into Greek when he wrote; and from the other collection of Sayings of Jesus, if it contained all that are in the Gospel of Matthew, he chose what were likely to interest Gentiles most.

There is another theory that has lately won the support of some eminent scholars, viz. that our Gospel according to St Luke is really a revised edition of an earlier Gospel which was compiled by Luke and was independent of Mark—a Gospel of Luke as original as the Gospel of Mark. Thus if Matthew is a new edition of Mark with a great deal of fresh material added, so our Luke would be a new edition of the original Luke with a great deal of Mark incorporated in it. And again as regards Matthew there has been suggested a similar theory of an original gospel independent of Mark. But these new theories have still to be subjected to detailed examination. To the writer of this sketch it does not seem likely that they will survive so as to take the place which the older theory has had in the general consensus of scholars of recent times. This older theory at all events shews us clearly the different characteristics of our Gospels as they are.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

RENDEL HARRIS. *Testimonies*. (Cambridge University Press, 1916, 1920.)

J. B. GREGORY. *The Oracles of Papias*. (Longmans, Green and Co., 1894.)

H. G. Evelyn White. *The Sayings of Jesus.* (Cambridge University Press, 1920.)

F. C. Burkitt. *The Gospel History and its Transmission.* (T. & T. Clark.)

M. R. James. *The Apocryphal New Testament.* (Oxford University Press, 1924.)

F. C. Burkitt. *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus.* (Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1910.)

J. A. Robinson. *The Study of the Gospels.* (Longmans, Green and Co.)

W. Wrede. *The Origin of the New Testament.* (Harper and Brothers, 1909.)

For study of the Gospels, either as literature or as history, a synopsis must be used, so that the narratives in the different Gospels can easily be compared one with another: e.g. (in Greek) A. Huck, *Synopse der drei ersten Evangelien*, 7th ed. 1928 (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen); (in English) Burton and Goodspeed, *A Harmony of the Gospels* (Scribners), in the version of 1881, or S. Mathews and E. J. Goodspeed, *The Student's Gospels* (University of Chicago Press, 1927), in an American translation.

The writer of this book assumes that anyone reading it will have before him a synopsis, or at least the text of the Gospels themselves, and will read the passages to which reference is made.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ACTUAL LIFE OF JESUS AS SET OUT IN MARK AND Q

IT is on Mark and the matter common to Luke and Matthew that we shall depend mainly for description of the actual life of Jesus, and we begin with what we can learn of His own experience.

Mark describes as the first of His public acts the calling of the four fishermen, two sets of brothers (Simon and Andrew, and James and John the sons of Zebedee), to come with Him and fish for men (Mk. i, 16–20); and a busy day of miracles in Capernaum follows at once (Mk. i, 21–34). That is a day of instant success, there is faith-healing in a number of cases of sick folk. Then early next morning He goes out alone to a quiet place to pray; and, when His friends go in search of Him to bring Him back, He says to them, 'Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth' (Mk. i, 35–38), or, as Luke expresses it (Lk. iv, 43), 'for therefore was I sent'.[1]

Here, at the outset of His public work, we are shewn the dominant motive of Jesus—the sense of 'mission'. He was

[1] If these are really words of Jesus at the time, the meaning in Mark may be only 'I went forth', namely, from Capernaum, whereas Luke's phrase implies the sense of divine mission to preach. The whole incident, however, shews that Jesus had this sense.

sent into the world by GOD to do something, as a father might send a son. This sense of mission had been with Him for some time. No doubt the four young fishermen were already friends to whom He had talked of it and of the Kingdom of GOD of which He was to spread the news, and they were ready to join Him and help in the work when He thought the right moment had come. It came when John the Baptizer was arrested and put in prison. It was in connexion with the Baptizer's preaching and His own baptism by him that the sense that GOD had chosen Him for special work had been brought vividly home to Him. 'Straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased' (Mk. i, 10, 11).

It was a deep religious experience similar in kind to that which some men in all ages have had; and the form in which it is described is similar to the form in which the prophets of old described their own vocation, in terms of vision and voice.

Read, for example, Isaiah's account of his call (Is. vi): 'In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple....And I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people...'; or Jeremiah i, 4, 'Now the word of the LORD came unto me, saying...'; or Obadiah i, 'The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the LORD'; or yet again descriptions

in which vision and voice are combined and blended in the very expression of the experience, such as Is. i, 1, 'The *word* that Isaiah the son of Amos *saw*'—an expression to which there is a parallel in the New Testament too, 'And I turned to *see the voice* which spoke with me' (Rev. i, 12). Indeed, the same kind of experience is described throughout the New Testament in the same way. In 'religious' experience we are not dealing with the world of sensation, with what can be touched and seen and heard, but with the intangible, the invisible, the inaudible. It is a world in which 'seeing' is 'hearing' and 'hearing' is 'seeing'. Some people might still say, 'I seemed to see' or 'I seemed to hear a call'—they would not say, 'I saw' or 'I heard a voice'. (If anyone today, when he is awake and fully conscious, thinks that he sees things or hears voices that others who are present do not see or hear, it is a symptom of grave disorder of body or of mind.) Most of us nowadays, in describing such religious experiences as we may have had, would say, 'I felt' or 'it flashed upon me', 'the idea came to me', 'it was borne in upon me' or 'I was convinced that I must do this or that'. We should be much less picturesque in our language than religious people were in old days and have been since when they were under the influence of the descriptions in the Bible.

We must distinguish between the fact of the individual experience, the fact, that is, of the inward call or vision or resolve, and the description of it as if it were something that happened in the outward world of sense and sound.

The account in Mark describes Jesus only (not anyone else) as 'seeing' and 'hearing'. Luke, who seems in all

such cases to be trying to understand what would nowadays be called the psychological situation, says that the experience came to Jesus while He was praying. That may be an important clue for us. It is when we pray, when we 'lift up our hearts to GOD' and 'draw near' to Him, that He 'draws near' to us. When we try to bring our lives, our desires and temptations and doubts and difficulties, into contact as it were with the highest and best that we know or can conceive; then, just because there is something in us that is godlike and in touch with GOD, we are likely to see more clearly the way we ought to take and, as it were, to hear an answer that tells us what is right. There may come to us something like Vision and Voice. It seems to be 'given' to us, and we receive it as from GOD.

If Mark's account is right, it was an experience like this that Jesus had at His baptism, and He must have told what He felt, and described it in this way, to some of His friends; and they must have told it again as they remembered it; and so the story came to Mark. It is likely that He had talked it over with Simon or Andrew or James and John, and they had discussed it together, and so were ready to leave their fishing and go with Him on a preaching tour at His bidding. In a modern biography we should be told this; but Mark in his Gospel hurries us on from incident to incident, and from picture to picture, with the words 'and straightway' as almost his only connecting link, and he hardly ever gives an explanation.[1]

[1] Explanations come in some of the later Gospels, and it is interesting to note how the editor of Matthew revised the earlier account, or how the story had grown by his time. It is said that

What is it then that the story means? It means that Jesus associated with His baptism by John the moment when He was flooded with the vivid consciousness of having received a special gift of spiritual insight, standing to GOD as son to a father, and being chosen and designated by GOD for a special purpose to carry out a mission in the world.

What was that mission? From the earliest stages of His work as actually described in Mark we could only say 'to preach and to cast out demons'. But a hint is dropped in the description of John's work as being to make ready the way of the Lord (Mk. i, 3), with reference to a prophecy that was believed to refer to the Messiah who was to come; and what the preaching was about is plainly stated as the 'gospel of God' and the nearness of 'the kingdom of God' (Mk. i, 14, 15).

Although it was as a faith-healer that Jesus first attracted attention, He had His purpose and teaching clear from the beginning. The healing of the sick, though it has so large

a story loses nothing in the telling, but in this version of it a good deal of its freshness and life-likeness seems to be lost. Read Mt. iii, 13–17. Jesus, as depicted in Mark, is very human and unconventional. But the later account seems to be intended (1) to explain how it was that He of all people could come to a baptism of repentance unto remission of sins, and (2) to guard against the idea that He could have had any sense of needing forgiveness. He came in order to leave nothing 'righteous' undone. And (at least in what are regarded as the best texts) the Vision and the Voice are represented not as being an inner experience of Jesus alone, but as incidents for all to see and hear ('the heavens were opened', and not 'Thou art' but 'This is my beloved son'—an audible proclamation).

a place in our Gospels, was only a consequence—an outward sign or a visible effect—of the impression produced by the new teaching (Mk. i, 27) and the new prophet's personality. The preaching must have been about the near approach of the new era which John the Baptizer had proclaimed, the coming of the Kingdom of GOD, when all the powers of evil would be subdued and good would be dominant in the world. And the conviction with which Jesus preached this good news, and the authority with which He spoke of the power and goodness of GOD, roused in some of those who saw and heard Him the same conviction. We shall have to consider later on what was meant by the Kingdom of GOD and what Jesus taught about it and its 'coming' and His own part in it. We note now only that it was the main theme of His teaching, and the object of His mission was to make people fit to be children of this Kingdom. So far as we can tell from the accounts we have He seems to have had at different times different ideas as to the nearness of the new era and the way in which it would be brought about. We shall consider these later. But before He began to teach at all He had made up His mind as to how He was Himself to do the work He felt He was called by GOD to do.[1]

After His baptism, and the vivid feeling of sonship and mission He experienced at it, He wanted to be alone and went away by Himself 'into the wilderness'; and there in His retirement He thought it over, what it meant and what He was to do and how He was to do it. He passed in review

[1] Read Mk. i, 12, 13. And then the two stories (from Q), Lk. iv. 1–13 and Mt. iv, 1–11.

the different ways in which success might be won, and those which His conscience rejected as unworthy He regarded as suggestions coming from the Devil.

We are face to face in the story of the Temptation with one of the most living and intimate pictures of Jesus we have. In telling it to His friends He took them completely into His confidence. He shewed them Himself, and how His mind was working. It is possible that the experience was not only described by Him in the dramatic form of the story, but was actually felt by Him in the form in which He told it; as if the Devil came to Him and spoke and caught Him up and took Him to Jerusalem and set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple. It would be a case like the 'visions' of the prophets, and the 'word of the Lord' coming to them. But that is only one of several possible descriptions of the actual experience. The real fact was the experience itself—the fact, that is, that Jesus felt Himself pulled towards things He knew to be wrong, things others had done and might do for the sake of success. He did not dally with them but faced up to them, and turned His back on them. He had conflicting ideals before Him, and He chose between them. He passed through a moral conflict and decided on His line of action.

Some have thought that the words of the Voice at the Baptism, 'my beloved son', had a special sense to Jews at the time, and that if Jesus used them in telling the story it must have meant that He was already conscious that the mission entrusted to Him was to be that of the long expected Messiah. It has also been thought that the 'temptations' are of such a kind as would only suggest themselves

to one who conceived himself to be called to fulfil in the world as it was the cherished ideas of the Jews as to what the 'redeemer of Israel' would be. In view of the fact that at the end of His life Jesus did not disown the charge that He thought He was the Messiah, it is not unnatural to suppose that He thought so at the beginning. But it is certain that His friends to whom He must have told the story did not understand from it that He thought He was the Messiah. And neither the phrase 'my beloved son' nor the character of the 'temptations' forces us to this conclusion. There is also good reason to think that the sense of mission with which Jesus began His public work was less definite and more experimental, and that the exact part He was to play, and what He was to be, became clearer to Him as His work went on. To assume that He had at the outset a full 'Messianic consciousness' might be to miss a large part of the real heroism of His life and its inspiration for ourselves: the patience and hope and steady confidence in God which He preserved while He 'learnt from the things that he suffered', as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of Him (Heb. v, 8). The word he uses means more than our word 'suffer'. It means what we mean by the word 'experience'. In this respect, like the rest of us, Jesus learnt from all the varied experiences of His life—this is how the writer to the Hebrews says He became able to sympathize with us. And in studying His life we shall do well to proceed on the assumption that while Jesus never lost the sense of sonship and mission that sprang to life at His baptism, the special meaning of His sonship and the special direction of His mission were determined by His

actual experience and the course of events, from which He learnt stage by stage what was His Father's will.

Let us then read the story of the Temptation in the Wilderness as the account He gave of the conflict in His mind as to the course He ought to pursue and of the decisions to which He came. The Devil's lever is throughout the idea of sonship—not that He was the Messiah, but that He was a chosen 'son' of GOD. Are there not 'rights' that He can claim? Jesus thinks not of rights, but of responsibilities and loyalty. What kind of help can a 'son' properly expect from a Father-GOD, all-powerful and all-loving, who has set him a task to do? And what methods of action would have such a Father's approval?

First comes the question suggested by the need of the moment for food: He is hungry. Here is a natural instinct that craves satisfaction—no harm in it: He can have His fill at once. But part of the business of life is keeping the satisfaction of the natural instincts, that we share with all other animals, subordinate to higher considerations and making them serve the larger purposes of human (rather than merely animal) life. Jesus puts the things of the spirit first. It is the higher life that must be satisfied, even if the lower instincts are starved.

Then, if we follow the order of the story in Luke (though in experiences of this kind the sequence is of little moment), it is the 'will to power' that has to be faced. Not for His own glorification—it is clear that Jesus was immune from any such vainglorious personal ambition—but for the sake of what He could do with it. If all the world were at His feet, all the authority of the world His,

He could make men do what they ought to do. But Jesus knows this is not GOD's way of working. It is the way men have followed often, what we call the way of the world, the way of force; and Jesus decides that it is the Devil's way and that He would be no better than a devil-worshipper if He tried to follow it. The 'son' of GOD must work in GOD's way.

And again during His time of retirement there had come into His mind the thought that He might defy all dangers and trust to GOD to intervene and preserve Him for the work He was to do. He need take no precautions, have no regard to the conditions of ordinary life in the world, for GOD would see Him through. But Jesus will not harbour this thought. There is to be no royal road to success for Him. What He has to do, He has to do in the world as it is, and there can be no exemption for Him from the common lot. It would be proof not of His faith in GOD, but of lack of faith, to put Himself in any position of danger from which only a miracle could save Him. It would be asking for a sign from heaven, putting GOD's power and love to a test through His own self-will or lack of proper care. So Jesus enters on His ministry resolved that His trust in His Father shall not mean any kind of attempt to force that Father's hand. He will use His own powers to the full and not expect what we now call the laws of Nature to be altered for His sake. He would work by natural human means, and depend on the good in the world and man and the power of truth to win its way.

'Forty days' was the time of Moses' sojourn on Mount Sinai in the story of the giving of the Law (Ex. xxiv, 18)

and a conventional number with the Jews. During the time of His retirement Jesus took count of Himself and the facts of life in the world of His day, and He got His ideals and principles clear. He could not have called it a time of temptation if He had not felt something within Him drawing Him towards the ideas He rejected. It is not being tempted to the gratification of lower instincts and aims that lowers a man, but yielding to the temptation or lingering over and harbouring the idea of gratification. Jesus emerged stronger in spirit from the experience to which the story says He was led by the Spirit. Until one has faced alternatives and made one's choice, one may be tossed like a shuttlecock from one to the other, and be the victim of the impulse of the moment. But when a decision is made, we have an ideal to live up to and a standard by which to act in future. For we are never free from temptations of the lower instincts, the body, the imagination, the mind.

It is a picture of life and the way to live that the story of the Temptation gives. One great decision on the right side at a crisis does not confer immunity from temptation ever afterwards. It was not so in the case of Jesus. As Luke puts it, the Devil 'departed from him for a season'. We are only given glimpses of the facts. One flash of light comes when He crushes Peter with the words, 'Get thee behind me, Satan' (Mk. viii, 33; Mt. xvi, 23; omitted by Luke). Peter was trying to dissuade Him from suggesting to the people the idea that the Messiah would have to suffer many things, and be rejected, and be killed. No one, Peter thought, would believe in a Messiah of that kind. The vigour of his Master's reply shews how real the temptation

was—such as comes to many a man who has the ear of the public—to give the people what they wanted and so secure a popular success. Jesus would not win success by compromise or silence, when truth was at stake: but there was temptation. And Luke (this time alone on the other side) records a saying of Jesus towards the end of His life to the disciples: 'Ye are they who have continued with me [been constantly with me] in my temptations' (Lk. xxii, 28). He could look back on His whole career as a succession of moments of decision and choice in all of which there was a pull the wrong way; and the disciples, many of whom must have shared some of Peter's misgivings, are praised for their loyalty to their Master all through. It is of course decision after decision of this kind that shews up a man and makes him what he is. And again, at the very end, the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk. xiv, 32–42) with the words, 'Father... remove this cup from me', and 'the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak', and 'pray that ye enter not into temptation', shews the shrinking from the fate that was threatening Him and the output of spiritual effort that was needed to overcome the strain, and bring Him to accept the issue as His Father's will. But the habit of a lifetime prevailed.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

K. Thieme. *Die Christliche Demut.* (A. Töpelmann, Giessen, 1906.)

H. J. C. Knight. *The Temptation of our Lord.* (S.P.C.K. 1922.)

CHAPTER THREE

THE WAY OF LIFE AND THE WAY OF TEACHING CHOSEN BY JESUS

As Jesus was born into a carpenter's home in a village of Galilee, so He probably followed a carpenter's trade there till He started out on His mission. After that, though He had His own home to go to, it was a wandering life from village to village and town to town that He led. He never went alone. He began, as we have seen, by gathering round Him a little group of men who went with Him, and sometimes at least there were women in the company. Though He kept in this way aloof from settled ties of place and work, He was not aloof from interest in ordinary life. He mixed freely with all sorts of people, and evidently liked them, good and bad, rich and poor, men and women and children. Wherever He went He made friends and accepted their hospitality, as in the case of Levi (or Matthew). This is a striking instance of His friendliness and freedom from prejudice, for Levi was a tax-gatherer and represented the hated, foreign, Roman government. But Jesus, seeing somehow that Levi was attracted to Him, seized the opportunity and boldly called him to come with Him and then went to his house and Levi gave a dinner in His honour. Jesus accepted the hospitality of one with whom the scribes and Pharisees would not have sat at table, and when they protested He said that Levi and

his friends were the very people He wanted to meet—He would go to those who needed Him.[1]

This was near Capernaum. Luke (xix, 1–10) tells another story of the same kind, at another place, Jericho, of another tax-gatherer, Zacchæus, a rich man, who had climbed up a tree in order to see Jesus as He passed by. Jesus has noticed what happened and at once hails him and asks for hospitality, quick to make the most of the chance of winning an 'outsider'. And when at the end of the visit (we are not told of the talks they must have had together meanwhile) Zacchæus is won over to a new conception of honour and fair-dealing in his profession, and says he will make amends, Jesus at once claims him as a true scion of GOD's people; for this is what 'son of Abraham' means in this passage. It is like St Paul's description of the new society of Christians as 'the Israel of God' (Gal. vi, 16). It is not racial descent that counts, but faith in GOD and temper and spirit and attitude to life.

Jesus practised no austerities, though He gave up the comforts of ordinary settled home life. He was no ascetic like John the Baptizer, and other 'holy men' of other religions. One of the malicious charges levelled at Him by His opponents was that He ate and drank like other men, and made friends of undesirable people (Lk. vii, 34; Mt. xi, 19), instead of behaving as prophets and holy men were expected to behave.[2]

[1] Read Mk. ii, 13–17; Lk. v, 27–32; Mt. ix, 9–13.

[2] 'Gluttonous' is perhaps too strong as an equivalent of the Greek word, and 'sinners' may mean no more than people who were careless in observance of the Law.

The strict discipline to which He put Himself was one of the mind and spirit. The hardships of the body He underwent were not sought out by Him but incidental to the way of life He chose, and He chose that way of life as the one that fitted His purpose best. He was not like St Francis: He had no high station in the world and no riches to renounce. The renunciations He made were made for the sake of the special work He felt called to do. And though He sometimes summoned rich men and poor men alike, without distinguishing between them, to abandon their wealth or their work and ties with ordinary life and join Him in His mission, these were all exceptional cases. He never suggested that a life of poverty and simplicity was for all men the only way of living a religious life and being free from the cares of the world, though He startled His disciples by some of His sayings about the danger of being rich. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God' (Mk. x, 25; Lk. xviii, 25; Mt. xix, 24). When they heard this, they cried out: 'Then who can be saved?' It seemed to them that a man who had not to work for his living had a much better chance of being religious than others. According to Mark, Jesus had already said that He meant those who trusted in riches, in contrast with trusting in GOD, and when the crisis of choice confronted them chose treasure in the world rather than 'treasure in heaven'. He had been disappointed in the Rich Young Ruler (read the whole story in Mk. x, 17–31) and He had put the case against him as strongly as possible. But the case was not really hopeless, and so He corrects the disciples' too literal

understanding of His words by declaring that 'all things are possible with God', and adding another saying of the same kind about the houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands that those who had left all and followed Him should receive instead. That would shew them what kind of hundred-per-cent. return for what they gave up for His sake He had in mind. They must not take what He said too literally; but it was true that people were always in danger of setting their hearts on the good things of the world and making them ends in themselves, and so missing the things that were of real abiding value; and to turn away from them altogether might be the only way of entering into the Kingdom of God and eternal life. Jesus did not disparage ordinary life in the world and its opportunities of doing true service to God and of making good prevail; but for the moment He wanted with Him only those who were ready to give themselves up wholeheartedly to His work. It is in this sense that three of the most austere of His sayings are to be understood:—the sayings in Lk. ix, 57–62 and Mt. viii, 19–22 (from Q). These sayings are warnings, meant to test would-be disciples. If you come with me, there are no home comforts for you, you must attend to nothing but the work in hand, there must be no kind of drawing back. You must not count the cost of doing what you know you ought to do. Yet at other times (see Lk. xiv, 25–35) He could bid men count the cost and test themselves before they engaged in the great undertaking, as in the sayings about the builder of a tower and the king going to war that Luke records in explanation of the fiercely deterrent saying, 'If any man cometh unto

me and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple'.

At the moment of that saying 'great multitudes' were going with Him. He wanted no half-and-half adherents, but picked men with Him, and He chose these startling words to make them understand how great were His demands. The saying seems to have been in Q, and Matthew gives it in the milder form, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me' (Mt. x, 37). Matthew may have toned down the harsher expression he found in Q; but, if he did, his version of the saying probably expresses what Jesus meant.[1] Both give, after this saying, another: 'Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple' (Lk. xiv, 27), 'And he that doth not take his cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me' (Mt. x, 38)—a saying which they both also give in another place in which they are copying Mark (Mk. viii, 34; Lk. ix, 23; Mt. xvi, 24) in another form: 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me'. And these sayings shew what is really meant. The man who is centred in himself and thinking of himself, or even of his home and his family, first of all, cannot be a follower of Jesus. There can be no service without sacrifice. There must be self-renunciation,

[1] This is shewn again in the saying 'Who is my mother and my brethren?...whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother' (Mk. iii, 33–35; Lk. viii, 19–21; Mt. xii, 46–50).

self-forgetfulness, and willingness to shoulder burdens, to do and dare, and endure and bear. Love means always giving without regard to getting. Yet Jesus adds that he who gives in this way will find that he gets:—in losing himself in this way he comes to the best he can be and to get the best he can have (Mk. viii, 35; Lk. ix, 24; Mt. xvi, 25).

It is easy to take these sayings as what is called world-denying or world-renouncing, implying that it is not possible to follow the Christian ideal while living an ordinary life in the world. Christians have taken them so, and some of the great ancient religions of the East are based on this belief. But it is important to notice that, like much of the teaching of Jesus, these sayings were called out from Him by particular cases with which He had to deal. No doubt similar cases often arise, in which complete renunciation may be required; but to suppose that Jesus intended to lay down a universal rule to this effect is to ignore the general tenour of His teaching and of His own practice, according to which ordinary life in the world has moral worth and is the means, for most men at least, of forming character and attaining eternal life.

His message was not for the few, but for all. The way of life He taught was one that could be followed by everyone. He made no distinctions between rich and poor, learned and unlearned, class and station in life. The masses, like sheep without a shepherd (Mk. vi, 34), appealed to His compassion, and without waiting for them to come to Him, He went into the midst of them. The year or two of His

life that our Gospels describe are crowded with journeyings and incidents. Sometimes the days were so full that 'they could not so much as eat bread' (Mk. iii, 20).

Jesus felt the strain of such a life, and though amid the crowd of friends and opponents alike He was conscious of being sustained by His Father in Heaven, He must escape from them to the quiet of the lakeside and the mountain, and the desert, where He could have rest, time to think, and the closer communion with GOD that prayer affords. Luke, as we have seen (ch. ii) lays special stress on His habit of prayer and connects with prayer some of the chief crises of His life, the resolutions He made, the sense of confidence He had, and the fresh understanding and assurance that came to Him in times of doubt and despondence. The few instances that are given (e.g. Mk. i, 35) seem to shew that He was often away alone in the mountains, which still remain unspoiled in the holy land where, as someone has said, 'everything else seems changed and vulgarized to-day'. Sometimes He took with Him two or three of His company (Mk. ix, 2, before the Transfiguration; Mk. xiv, 33, in Gethsemane), and sometimes He took them all—'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile' (Mk. vi, 31).

His way of teaching in some respects was not original. At first, at all events, in Galilee He went to the usual place of worship and spoke in the synagogue (Mk. i, 21, 39, iii, 1, vi, 2). This must have been by invitation of the officials in charge of the service. But after a time they resented, it seems, the freedom of His teaching and His unconventional ways, and the synagogues were no longer

open to Him. We should gather this from the account in Mark (vi, 1–6) of his bad reception at Nazareth.[1]

Nor was the form He gave to His teaching new. Other teachers had made use of parables, and of startling sayings expressing some great truth in its extremest form, without any qualifications—now one great truth and now another. It was the way to arrest attention, and He used freely the ideas that were current among the people of His time and the picturesque strong speech of epigram and poetic exaggeration, to make them think. A good example of this kind is the saying (from Q), 'if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would obey you' (Lk. xvii, 6); or the other version of the saying that Matthew gives (Mt. xvii, 20), 'Ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove'. Everyone who heard Him at the time would have understood that the moving of trees and mountains was only a symbol of the great things that faith enabled a man to do. For faith the word 'impossible' does not exist; and though we do not take the saying literally, we must understand, as His hearers understood, that He meant to call men

[1] Luke (iv, 16–30) makes a much fuller story of this episode, placing it at the very beginning of the ministry. He represents Jesus as already expecting hostility and provoking it, being cast out of the synagogue and only escaping a violent death by a miraculous disappearance. In doing this he is using a literary device and anticipating the actual order of history. He sets it as a prologue to his account of the ministry of Jesus in which he is to describe the rejection of Jesus by His own nation, and the way in which He triumphed over death by resurrection, and the gospel passed from the Jews to the Gentiles.

to unlimited faith in GOD and to assure them that there were no bounds to His love and power to help them, if only they would follow the way He pointed out, if mountains stand in the way, they shall be removed.

But besides this kind of teaching in public, in the open street and in the houses of friends, there are constant references to His teaching in private. One of the most notable characteristics of His method was the forming of a group of men knit together by personal intimacy with one another and Himself. He must constantly have been in conversation with this group. They were not very quick-witted or intelligent. They did not always understand His teaching or His parables, and He explained to them in private (e.g. Mk. iv, 10). A good deal of what is most familiar to us in His teaching is said to have been given to this smaller group of His disciples, though sometimes the context shews that others besides were present; and there seems to have been an inner group of three, Peter and James and John, with whom He was in more intimate relations than with the rest.

Nor, again, was His teaching in detail as new as it has seemed to some to be. Much of it is the natural outcome of the teaching of Hebrew prophets and psalmists and 'wise' men with which He was familiar, and plenty of parallels can be found in the sayings of later Jewish teachers, as well as in the teaching of Greek philosophers and moralists of which He would know nothing. But never before had the character and personality of the Teacher been in such complete accord with His teaching that it seemed to come from Him as the expression of Himself. It was this feature of His teaching that was most impressive from the first.

Mark describes it as the 'authority' with which He spoke, Mk. i, 21–28: 'And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes' (verse 22); and, 'What is this? a new teaching: with authority he commandeth the unclean spirits themselves, and they obey him'.

Ordinary Jewish teachers, like the scribes and rabbis, were accustomed to base what they had to say on the Law and the explanations of its meaning and the application of it that had been made by previous teachers. So far as Jesus refers to this 'tradition of the elders' it is to contrast it with the 'commandment of God' (Mk. vii, 8, 9). He did not regard Himself or His disciples as bound by the explanations of the Law that others had given. Even the precepts of the Law themselves He treated with great freedom. This is specially striking in Matthew's account of His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old... but I say unto you' is the formula that introduces saying after saying that seems to supersede a precept of the Law (e.g. Mt. v, 21, 27, 33, 38, 43) and actually does go so much deeper into the moral questions involved that it leaves the formal precept of the Law far behind.[1]

Matthew may be partly responsible for this emphasis on the difference between the moral teaching of Jesus and the precepts of the Law, but he probably found the expression

[1] It is in this sense that He could be said to bring the Law to fulfilment, by shewing that it was not enough to take it literally and keep it only in the letter (Mt. v, 17, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil').

in the collection of sayings he used, for Luke has one such instance, 'But I say unto you which hear', which seems to imply a quotation from the Law preceding it (Lk. vi, 27). It is impossible not to feel that the moral ideals of Jesus are on a higher plane than the Law; and that is what men felt at the time. Here was a teacher who did not appeal to other people's opinions or any authority outside Himself. He did not argue about goodness and badness or give reasons for His teaching. His teaching seemed to come straight from Himself, and to go straight to the point, as if He had a vivid picture of the nature of things before Him and knew by a kind of instinct the truth about them, what was wrong and what was right. He saw it by intuition and declared it as He saw it, just on His own word—'Verily, I say unto you' (strengthened in the Fourth Gospel to 'verily, verily'). And He acted as He spoke. Words and acts came from Him spontaneously, with complete freedom from convention and with no kind of compromise. And He spoke in a way that people could understand, drawing His similes and illustrations from Nature and all the ordinary occupations and activities of men; from flowers and trees and farming and fishing and building and letting and hiring and masters and servants and all the affairs of daily life. He seemed to see in Nature and the ordinary experience of human life a kind of reflexion of God and His purposes. So He made old ideas fresh, and brought new ones home to the minds or hearts of the people who heard Him by the aptness of His illustrations.

In the parables we have some of His simplest and some of His deepest teaching. It was a form of teaching which

had been in use from time immemorial. The simplest story about things familiar in daily life, with a lesson contained in it, is a parable. The lesson may be merely prudential, or as to what pays best in the world. The parable about the Unjust Steward (Lk. xvi, 1–13) is a story of a man who 'did a good stroke of business' for himself; he shewed his worldly wisdom and acted cleverly in his own interests. But he cheated his employer. The morality of the transaction is not considered—only its cleverness with regard to the end in view. And the suggestion is that some of the cleverness and foresight which a man in danger of losing his place in the world of business employs might well be used in the much more lasting business in which the sons of light are engaged. It is a kind of *argumentum ad hominem* and an instance of a kind of parable in which one main idea is illustrated which can be transferred to other subjects, while the details of the story are ignored for the purpose of the teacher.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus the beggar who lay at his gate (Lk. xvi, 19–31) also has probably one purpose only, and that is not to press on rich people the duty of giving to poor people, nor to teach any doctrine of a future life in which the inequalities of this life will be redressed, but to insist that it is conduct in this life that determines for everyone his condition hereafter. The imagery is all taken from current ideas and beliefs—these are just used as a framework, and the parable is not intended to teach anything about the nature of the future life but to illustrate the one idea that nothing hereafter can alter character formed in this life.

The word 'parable' comes from a Greek word that means a placing of one thing side by side with another and so a comparison, and it is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament as the equivalent of a common Hebrew word that in our translation is usually rendered 'proverb'. The point is always that there is some kind of likeness implied, and a kind of image or picture of something else that is real or true is given by the 'parable', which serves to impress the idea on the mind and memory. Simple simile comes first and we can have a story that keeps to one simile throughout (So and so is like so and so...etc.); then metaphor, when one thing is called something else when what is meant is that in some of its characteristics it is like it; and then, when a whole story is made up of metaphors, every word used standing for something else, we have 'allegory', as in the Vine and its Branches (Jn. xv, 1–8) and the Good Shepherd and the Sheep and the Wolf (Jn. x, 1–21). These allegories are found peculiarly in the Fourth Gospel, but the other Gospels contain some stories that do not only draw out one idea with one simile running through them but also contain metaphor and become more like allegories. The two kinds are mixed and the details are intended to suggest things of different kinds.

Some scholars would limit the meaning of 'parable' to a simple story in which one idea only is intended to be taught. They think that this was the only kind of parable actually used by Jesus Himself and that afterwards, as the stories were repeated, a new turn was given to them and additions introduced to make them apply to conditions later than the time of Jesus and suggest ideas which were

not in His mind. Considering that all the sayings of Jesus were spoken in Aramaic and afterwards translated into Greek and circulated by word of mouth, it would be contrary to all experience that they should all be preserved exactly as they were spoken.

In the interval before they were written down, and even afterwards, before our Gospels were compiled, some variations of the kind suggested may easily and naturally have occurred. And, again, some new stories based on vague memory of what Jesus actually had said may have been made and pointed up to fit the circumstances of a later time. But there is no reason to suppose that Jesus confined Himself to the simplest kind of parable only and did not allow Himself as much freedom in this form of teaching as others had done. And if we admit this, the fact that a vein of allegory enters into some of the parables will not by itself be a good reason for doubting that they were spoken by Jesus.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

A. Jülicher. *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu.* (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 2nd ed. 1910.)

P. Fiebig. *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu.* (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1904.)

P. Fiebig. *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu.* (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1912.)

L. E. Browne. *The Parables of the Gospels in the Light of Modern Criticism.* (Cambridge University Press, 1913.)

W. H. Robinson. *The Parables of Jesus in their Relation to His Ministry.* (University of Chicago Press, 1928.)

T. R. Glover. *The Jesus of History.* (Student Christian Movement.)

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT JESUS THOUGHT ABOUT GOD AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

EVERY religion has its own conception of GOD, and the Christian religion has as its own the doctrine of the Trinity. But this doctrine was not taught by Jesus in the way that a doctrine of GOD was taught by the founders of other great religions. Like other Christian doctrines it depends largely on beliefs about Jesus Himself which were the outcome of the experience of His followers after His death. It depends on their conviction that the relations they had with Jesus, risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven as they believed, were relations with GOD Himself, and that the Spirit of Jesus was the Spirit of GOD. It is this conviction that gives to the Christian conception of GOD a character all its own. But there was no clear conviction of this kind in anyone's mind in His lifetime; nor, indeed, can we penetrate into the mind of Jesus deeply enough to find exactly what He thought of Himself.

But there is much to shew what He thought about GOD and about the 'Kingdom of God' of which He was always talking. He lived continuously and consistently as it were 'in the presence of God'. 'Let us draw near to God, and He will draw near to us' we say; and we have our special times and ways for quickening in us the consciousness of GOD. But Jesus seems always to have been conscious of

His nearness. He thought of GOD as His Father, and His attitude to Him was that of a son admitted to a large measure of his father's confidence, and entrusted by him with a special mission to the rest of his fellow-men. But He too, as we have seen, felt the need of, and took pains to secure, times of quiet retirement from the ordinary routine of His life when He might get closer fellowship and communion with His GOD, and learn more of His will. His constant habit of prayer, and of waiting for the will of GOD to be manifested more clearly to Him, is shewn in the story of His life. No less clear is His conviction that He knew GOD as no one else had known Him (see especially Lk. x, 22, and Mt. xi, 27). It was GOD's will that His Kingdom should be established, His reign, His rule, His sovereignty. He had a plan and a purpose for the world and the men in it that was not effective yet. His purpose was being thwarted, but it was to be supreme in the world. Jesus was certain of this. The thought of this Kingdom of GOD was central in all His teaching. But what kind of GOD and what kind of kingdom was it?

In His thought about GOD and the Kingdom of GOD Jesus drew largely from the great religious thinkers of His own race. His GOD was the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the GOD of Hebrew prophet and psalmist, the GOD too, it seems, of later Jewish apocalyptists. He based His teaching on the Old Testament belief in a personal GOD who was before all things and was the creator and preserver of the world and all that is. Perhaps there was not one thought about GOD in all His teaching that one of the prophets before Him had not had and declared. But all

had passed through His own mind and been sifted, as it were, in the sieve of His own experience. It was not that He consciously, so far as we can tell, selected this thought and discarded that. The later prophets themselves had sometimes done so with regard to the teaching of earlier prophets. Progress from lower to higher ideas of GOD can be traced in the collection of books which the Jews held all alike as sacred; and in some respects perhaps Jesus still had in the background of His mind some of the earlier ideas that belonged to the religious childhood of His people or the earlier stages of GOD's revelation to them of Himself. But Jesus had had His own revelations in His own experience, and, however much the religious ideas of the Hebrew prophets who preceded Him contributed to His own apprehension of truth about GOD, yet He only appeals to any such 'authority' to illustrate His own teaching. He is usually content to let His own certainties speak for themselves and to say what He knew to be true; and it is the emphasis He puts on some ideas rather than on others that gives its special character to the picture of GOD that His sayings and acts set before us.

For example, He does not discard the ideas that the GOD of Israel was the true GOD, that the Jews had been peculiarly His people, and that by and through them chiefly His purposes for mankind were to be realized. Even at the end His disciples could ask, 'Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts i, 6) and He only put the question by, leaving the idea uncorrected. He would not discourage in anyone the belief that he himself as an individual person and his fortunes were GOD's

concern. But He made no restrictions. He spoke to all alike of GOD as GOD of the whole world, excluding no one from His fatherly care, willing the best for all.

Some of His most striking sayings about GOD's care for individual men were indeed addressed to the band of disciples on whom He depended to spread His teaching in face of persecution ('the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore'—Lk. xii, 7; Mt. x, 30, 31).

But one of the most arresting features of His teaching was the emphasis He laid on the value of the individual as an end in himself in the eyes of GOD, and there is never any suggestion that He had a particular race or class of men in view. It was Everyman whom GOD had made to be His son.

Perhaps the most distinctive Christian conviction about GOD is stated in the words 'God is Love'. But we do not find this conviction stated in the lifetime of Jesus—not indeed until Christians had come on the one hand to see in the death of Jesus on the Cross the means of their redemption or salvation, and on the other hand to regard Him as so closely associated with GOD that it was at once true that GOD the Father gave His beloved Son to die for men and that the Son loved them and gave Himself for them. That was proof such as had never been before—a new revelation that Love was the chief characteristic of GOD.

Love, we know, can be exacting. If it desires the best possible for the object of its love, it also demands a high standard of character and the right use of opportunities. And in the teaching of Jesus there is austerity and sternness. His teaching gives no countenance to any idea of an easy-

going GOD, tolerant of evil, or in any kind of way neutral when moral issues are at stake. The image of the Judge is frequently used, and that of the lord and his servants (that is, in the economic conditions of those days, the master and his slaves); and if those who range themselves on the side of Jesus and live according to His ideals are to be rewarded, punishment—sometimes pictured in awe-inspiring forms—is declared to be the fate of the rest. (See especially the parables of the Pounds (Minae), Lk. xix, 11–27, or the Talents, Mt. xxv, 14–30.)

It is even said that the servant who did not do his master's will, even though he did not know what it was, shall suffer for it: he shall be beaten, though only with few stripes (Lk. xii, 48).

But special condemnation falls on two classes: (1) those who were given high places in the world and misused their power and opportunities (see Lk. xii, 42–46 and Mt. xxiv, 45–51); and (2) those who made profession of faith in Jesus ('who profess and call themselves Christians' in the words of our prayer) and did things in His name, and yet were indifferent to the call at their own doors of their fellow-men in suffering and want (see Mt. xxv, 31–46).

A man's faith in GOD, as Jesus thought of Him, was not mere trust in His love and providence and gratitude for His gifts. It must be shewn by the way he uses the advantages given him and in acts of unselfishness and love towards his brothers; for GOD is Father of all men and therefore all men are members of one family.

There is another way in which we may see what Jesus thought about GOD. What we pray for to GOD shews some-

thing of our own character, but it also shews a good deal of what we think about GOD. Very few of the prayers of Jesus are known to us. There is the prayer in Gethsemane (Mk. xiv, 36, and parallels); and the prayer from the Cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Lk. xxiii, 34). Praise of GOD and thanksgiving were the chief parts of the prayer of Jews, like the 'Father glorify thy name' in Jn. xii, 28, and the great thanksgiving in Lk. x, 21 and Mt. xi, 25.[1] In the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples we see some of the leading ideas of His theology. We know it as 'the Lord's prayer', and it is natural to suppose that it represents, so far as it goes, the subjects of His own prayers. 'Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation' (Lk. xi, 2–4).

This is probably the original form of the prayer. The longer version of it in Mt. vi, 9–13 simply expands some of the clauses. For 'Father' in the address it gives 'Our Father who art in heaven'. After the clause 'thy kingdom come' it adds 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth'. And it enlarges the final clause by the words 'but deliver us from the evil one'.

Everyone who uses the prayer should consider its meaning clause by clause, and what kind of GOD He is of whom such things can be asked.

[1] The great intercessory prayer in Jn. xvii, 1–26 is probably the author's own composition summing up what he believed to be most characteristic in the prayer of Jesus.

At present we want to consider only what the prayer for the coming of the Kingdom of GOD means.

The clause 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth' was probably intended as a kind of paraphrase of the two previous clauses. The establishment of the sovereignty of GOD on earth would mean that throughout its length and breadth His will would be supreme. Everyone would know and do His will. Whatever Jesus meant by the Kingdom of GOD coming on earth it certainly included the idea of an order of human life and affairs very different from the present order. Of His sayings and parables about it some simply proclaim it as a thing of value beyond all measures of value; some partly describe what it is; and some suggest the way in which it may come into being.

In the first class are the similes in Mt. xiii, 44–46 (the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price). It is something of worth so great that a man would give all that he has to have it for his own.

Considering how prominent a place the coming of the Kingdom had in the teaching of Jesus, it may seem strange that there is so little actual description of what it would be. It is as though the idea of GOD's reigning on earth was enough. Then at least all would be well with the world.

What Jesus seems to have been most concerned with was to describe the kind of people who would be fit members of an order of life in which GOD's will was actually operating effectively, and in the Sermon on the Mount we have a number of illustrations of the principles and ideals and character which qualify for admission to the Kingdom. There are also other sayings about it. For example, Jesus

tells the sons of Zebedee (Mk. x, 35–45 || Mt. xx, 20–28)[1] that high place in the Kingdom will be only for those who are able to suffer much and devote themselves to the service of others. Again, He tells the scribe (Mk. xii, 28–34) that whole-hearted love of GOD and of your neighbour is enough to bring a man very near to the Kingdom of GOD.

This is a saying which ought to be carefully considered. The Kingdom is usually referred to as if it were an event to be expected in the future, whether sooner or later—something that would happen in the course of the history of the world, as an earthquake happens, or a great war, so that everyone knows about it. It could be represented by the picture of 'the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven' so that everyone would see (Mk. xiii, 26, 27; Lk. xxi, 27, 28; Mt. xxiv, 30, 31). There was a time coming which would be a day of judgement and a day of reward (see the parables, Mt. xxiv, 45–xxv, 46).

But again there is this saying to the Scribe which suggests a different idea. It is as if by the Kingdom of GOD was meant nothing outward and visible or 'happening', nor even a new arrangement of things here at all, but instead of this something inward in men's own hearts and minds. It might lead to great changes in the organization of human society. But the Kingdom was not like any earthly kingdom, however righteous and wise and perfectly managed it might be. It was a spiritual order that had nothing to do with place and time, a realm of ideas and

[1] Note how Matthew relieves the two apostles of the charge of self-seeking and presumption by making their mother ask for them.

qualities like holiness and righteousness and love. And a man might at least touch as it were the threshold of that realm here and now, if his own disposition and state of mind and character were in harmony with those qualities—if he was already thinking and feeling and meaning in accordance with them.

So, too, there is the saying, that only Luke records, which is generally translated 'the kingdom of God is within you' (Lk. xvii, 21). If this translation is right,[1] the saying confirms the idea of the Kingdom just described. It is a settled habit or state of a man's own mind, an inward experience, when his thoughts and desires and affections are pure and good.

On another occasion, with reference to the Jewish rules about meats that might or might not be eaten, Jesus had said (Mk. vii, 14–23) that nothing of that kind could defile a man. It was the state of his heart (or his mind) that made him what he was, and if he was defiled it was because of what was within his heart—'evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness'. 'All these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.' No man with these things in his heart could be near the Kingdom.

So, almost as if with this saying in his mind, St Paul says

[1] The meaning may be 'is in your midst'. This suits the context best. Jesus is discouraging calculations as to when the Kingdom would come, and says it will be no question of here or there. It will be on them, in their midst, outside all calculations, before they know.

that 'the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in holy spirit' (Rom. xiv, 17) and he writes (Col. iii, 12–16) of 'a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering', and of forgiveness and love, as the characteristics of 'God's elect'. In them the peace of Christ rules in their hearts and the word of Christ dwells in them richly in all wisdom.

Anyone whose state of mind and heart could be described in this way would have the Kingdom of GOD 'within' him. He would be 'not far from the kingdom of God', he would indeed be living already in the realm of 'heaven', while still on the plane of earth. So the Kingdom would not be merely a far-off event in the future, but a present fact of experience, and the good news Jesus preached would be that the Kingdom might be to everyone a present ideal and power.

Again, as to the way in which the Kingdom of GOD may come into being, there are references to it that suggest a dramatic intervention by GOD in the affairs of the world. One of them is the saying in Mk. ix, 1 (‖s Lk. lx, 27; Mt. xvi, 28), 'Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power', with which the saying in Mt. x, 23, 'Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come', may be compared. Jesus seems at an earlier stage of His ministry to have expected some great act of GOD by which the new *régime* would be established; and even at the end His words to the high priest (Mk. xiv, 62; Mt. xxvi, 64) imply the same expectation. We must not ignore the fact

that this 'catastrophic' conception of human history and of GOD's interventions in the ordinary course of affairs is implied in many of the sayings of Jesus (see further the Appendix to this chapter, pp. 306–309).

Yet there is also much in His teaching that is in line with the knowledge we now have that GOD's general way of working is gradual and evolutionary rather than sudden and revolutionary.

There are the parables of the Seed that grows in ways invisible to men (Mk. iv, 26–29), of the Mustard Seed that has tiny beginnings and becomes a great tree (Mk. iv, 30–32), and of the Leaven (Mt. xiii, 33); and these all imply a gradual diffusion as it were of a new idea or a new spirit in the world, permeating the minds and hearts of men and affecting all their relationships with one another. So human society would become more and more like what GOD intends it to be, till it fulfilled the idea of the Kingdom of GOD on earth, and so in this way the Kingdom would be established.

It was an age when the problem of evil and pain loomed large in men's eyes, making it hard to believe that the power and the spirit at the heart of things is really love. But Jesus boldly held to His belief in GOD as Father and men as brothers. These two ideas went together in His thought. The Kingdom was the fulfilment or realization of them both together, and if men would bear themselves as sons of GOD and act to one another as brothers, they would be in enjoyment of the power of the Kingdom here and now.

APPENDIX

The Place of Jesus in the Kingdom

JESUS believed that He had been sent by GOD not only to announce the speedy coming of the Kingdom and to tell men what it meant, but also to occupy a central place in it. Our Gospels were not written till His followers had become convinced that He was the Messiah foreseen by the prophets of Israel, and this conviction seems to have affected some of the accounts of incidents in the narrative. We have seen that Jesus Himself, at all events in the latter part of His career, accepted the idea that He was, or was to be, Messiah. But He seems to have spoken of Himself not as Messiah, but as the Son of Man. These two terms represent two different sets of ideas.

The Messiah that was most widely expected by Jews was to be a great Jewish prince or warrior king, who would free them, by force of arms and wars and victories, from all foreign domination and establish a world-wide rule, with the Jewish religion supreme and their GOD as the GOD of all the world. With this political and warlike idea of the Messiah Jesus would have nothing to do. (See pp. 353 ff.)

But there was also widely current at the time another idea in expressing which another title, 'the Son of Man', was used. This phrase in Aramaic might mean only Man (as it does, for example, in Psalm viii, in Ezekiel and other passages in the Old Testament, and probably in Mk. ii, 10). In Daniel vii, with the same meaning, the phrase

'like unto a son of man' describes the heaven-sent but still human king who was to preside over the kingdom that was to redress the misfortunes of the people of Israel and bring them prosperity unknown before. This human and earthly kingdom, presided over by faithful Jews, is contrasted as the rule of the Saints of the Most High with the brute kingdoms of the world, and the establishment of it is thought of as the act of GOD. But in later Jewish writings, which were regarded as prophetic of the future, especially the Book of Enoch,[1] 'the Son of Man' becomes the title of a supernatural being, the special representative of GOD, destined at the moment of GOD's choice to be miraculously sent from above 'on the clouds of heaven', to establish GOD's Kingdom on earth, by a sudden catastrophic intervention of overwhelming power. Great disasters or 'woes' would precede His coming. Much of the imagery by which the end is depicted in our Gospels (e.g. Mk. xiii) is apparently derived from these later Jewish writings.

Moreover, Jesus is described as using not only this imagery but also the title 'Son of Man' of Himself; and so He would be considered by those who heard Him and knew these writings to be supporting the ideas expressed in them.

Yet it is obvious that He did not fulfil the descriptions of the Book of Enoch, and when He used the title of Himself He must have had some other idea in His mind. The title is used chiefly after Peter had blurted out his own belief that Jesus was the Messiah (Mk. viii, 27–

[1] The book which is referred to in the Epistle of Jude, verse 14.

30; ||s Lk. ix, 18–21 and Mt. xvi, 13–16). Jesus at once begins to impress on the disciples the idea, for which they were quite unprepared, that, if He was the Messiah, it was a Messiah unlike what they expected—namely, a suffering Messiah; and He uses the third person and the ambiguous title 'the Son of Man' (Mk. viii, 31).[1]

It has been suggested that Jesus intentionally used a title which would not be understood as referring to Himself in His present state and that none the less He regarded Himself as destined, after the suffering and death which He anticipated, to return to earth and fulfil the *rôle* of the Son of Man of the Book of Enoch. He was the Messiah-to-be, and in the future He would come again to carry out the Judgement which would precede the establishment of the new era. The belief that He would thus come again has been at all events the belief of the vast majority of Christians ever since. It is the only belief on the subject of the Kingdom that has a place in both the Nicene and the Apostles' Creed.

There had been nothing like this belief before. The idea of a Messiah, or a Son of Man, who lived as other men in the world in lowliness and poverty, was rejected and put to

[1] Some who heard Him might suppose that He was speaking of someone else who was to come after Him. At a later time, when it had become clear that He meant Himself, the writer of a Gospel could substitute the first personal pronoun for the impersonal title, as Matthew does in this passage, Mt. xvi, 21 (cf. Mk. viii, 31); and elsewhere he uses the title instead of the personal pronoun which is in the passage he is copying (cf. Mt. xvi, 13 and Mk. viii, 27), and so the evidence as to the use Jesus Himself made of the title is confused in our Gospels.

death as an evil-doer, and yet would come again in 'glory', was entirely new. It shews the kind of 'originality' Jesus had, and it warns us not to take any narrow view of what He meant by the Kingdom of GOD. We may not be able to express it fully, but all the different ideas of the Kingdom which we have noted would have to be represented in a complete picture of the truth about it, as Jesus conceived it.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

A. SCHWEITZER. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, chap. xv ff. (A. and C. Black, 1910.)

W. J. FERRAR. *The Uncanonical Jewish Books*. (S.P.C.K. 1918.)

R H. CHARLES. *The Book of Enoch*. (S.P.C.K. 1917.)

J. R. SEELEY. *Ecce Homo*. (Macmillan and Co.)

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT JESUS THOUGHT ABOUT THE WORLD AND MAN'S PLACE IN IT

To Jesus this is God's world and all the things in it and all the men and women and children are His concern. 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust' (Mt. v, 45).

His knowledge and love of Nature is shewn by His constant references to sky and cloud and wind, mountain and lake, and flowers and fruits and trees and birds and fish. He draws from the life of Nature many of His most vivid illustrations of what is true of God and man's life. God's care extends through it all. He clothes the grass of the field, and feeds the birds of the heaven, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. The lily of the field, the common wild flower, is more beautiful and attractive than the splendid raiment of kings (Mt. vi, 26–30).

He spent most of His time in the open country, and again it is from the ordinary life of a farm, cleaning the land, ploughing and raking and weeding, and seedtime and harvest, that more of His pictures are drawn. There are seasons for this and seasons for that. There are mysteries in the life of animals and plants, in growth and maturity and decay, that are symbols of what is true in man.

Yet His interest in the ordinary life of men is shewn no less clearly by His illustrations from trades and commerce, buying and selling and banking. Jesus was in close touch

with this ordinary life of man, no hermit or recluse. Though in the latter part of His life He stood detached from its natural occupations, it is evident that He looked on them with interest and understanding and was in sympathy with the men and women engaged in them, whatever He thought about the coming of the Kingdom and the changes it would bring with it.

Obviously, too, Jesus enjoyed life. In spite of the sternness of His attitude to certain types of people and wrongdoing, and His unfailing sympathy with sufferers of every kind, there is a joyousness in His outlook on the world that is in striking contrast with the pessimistic temper of some of His followers. He never represents pain as a good thing. It is something evil, a positive active evil that must be resisted and overcome and annihilated by the stronger force of good. He would bear hardship and suffering without flinching Himself when it came, or when He believed that it was GOD's will that He should die by a cruel and ignominious death (see the picture of Him in Gethsemane and throughout His trial). But there was no passiveness in His bearing towards the cruelties and the sufferings of others around Him. Nor is 'the Man of Sorrows' at all an adequate description of Him. 'Pleasure', indeed, is a word that is not in His vocabulary; but He had much to say about happiness and the way to it. The Beatitudes are a summary of part of His teaching about the way to be happy. If they seem to describe passive states rather than active ways of living, yet there is plenty of teaching about the activities of life.

It is true that Jesus more often bids men *be* this or that

than *do* this or that: but none the less He looks to their doings to shew what they are. 'By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' and, again, 'Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven' (Mt. vii, 16, 21; Lk. vi, 43–46). The parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Mt. xiii, 45, 46) is His challenge to adventure. There is no 'safety first' in His language, but just as in the story of Peter in the boat in a storm He bids him come boldly to Him over the waves (Mt. xiv, 28, 29), or in the story of the fishermen He bids them launch out into the deep (Lk. v, 4), so He would have men always courageous and venturesome and resourceful, ready to take risks and put their faith into action.

A famous phrase of Burke's speaks of two things—'the glory of God' and 'the relief of man's estate'. Jesus seems hardly to distinguish between the two. In several of the parables He insists on the duty of service, likening life to a trust committed to each of us by God. Different capacities are given us, and different opportunities of service to correspond with our capacities. The capacities themselves are the trust, and they are not the same nor equal for all men. But to all alike there is one and the same call, one and the same duty is laid on them all—to cultivate their capacities and make the best use of them for the good of all. And they must be on the look-out for opportunities and ready to take responsibilities.

This seems to be the conviction that governs what He says about riches and high station in the world, and about

the need of being ready to meet an emergency whenever it comes.

These ideas are vividly expressed in the parables of the Pounds (Lk. xiv, 11–28), the Talents (Mt. xxiv, 14–30), the Ten Virgins (Mt. xxv, 1–13), the Stewards (Lk. xii, 41–47), the Judgement (Mt. xxv, 34–46).

This is the kind of adventure and ambition that Jesus encourages. Many of His sayings and parables on the subject are only narrated by Matthew, but Mark tells how Jesus called the disciples to Him and said (Mk. x, 42–45) 'whosoever would become great among you, shall be your servant: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be bond-servant of all. For indeed the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many' (cf. Mt. xx, 25–28 and Lk. xxii, 25, 26; also Mk. ix, 35 and Mt. xxiii, 11). And all the evangelists record, with slight variations, the comprehensive saying to the effect that the man who is set on saving himself shall lose himself, but he who is willing to disregard himself will find his true life (see the saying in Mark viii, 35, with the parallels Lk. ix, 24, Mt. xvi, 25; another version of it in Mt. x, 39 and Lk. xvii, 33). The self-centred life is not worthy to be called life. Selfishness is the death of the soul. The version of the saying that is given in the Fourth Gospel (Jn. xii, 25), 'He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal' is a still more emphatic statement of the thought that is also expressed in the words 'For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life (*or* his own self)?' (Mk. viii, 36; Lk. ix, 25; Mt. xvi, 26).

The saying that the world is 'a vale of soul-making' is quite in keeping with the ideas of Jesus. Soul-making is the business of life. There is nothing so important as a man's personality or character. That is what survives when the body dies. The world that confronts man is one of GOD's ordering with a view to man's training and perfecting: 'Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt. v, 48). For each man it is only the first stage in an experience which will not be completed here but in another world, above and beyond, hereafter. This conviction underlies the whole life and teaching of Jesus. Life is a trust committed to everyone born into the world. Hereafter he will have to give an account of the trust. It is what he is making of it, stage by stage of his life, that makes him what he is; and what he really is will determine his state in his future life, whether the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him (Mk. viii, 38 and ||s) or shall say to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant' (Mt. xxv, 23).

Of this future life, and of the 'other world' in which it is to be lived, the recorded sayings of Jesus give hardly any description. He used the imagery that was current in His day and familiar to His hearers. Everyone after death would have to undergo a judgement and there would be rewards and punishments. The judgement would be committed to the 'Son of Man'. If Jesus believed that He was this Son of Man, then judgement would be in the hands of one who knew from His own experience, from within, all the difficulties of human life, and would make allowances for them. But the standard would be the high standard

which He set up in His teaching and lived out in His life—His ideas and ideals. And whatever He thought or taught about the future, it is always the present with which He concerns Himself—how a man is using his life here and now. Whether the 'Kingdom' is to come visibly and suddenly, or after long delay, or only to be realized in its fulness by anyone after this life; yet its principles ought to guide and shape life now. It is the immediate present that matters. This note of immediacy remains as the permanent truth of the call 'the Kingdom of God is at hand'. In the sayings and parables of the three earlier Gospels the judgement is described in imagery drawn from the courts of earthly potentates administering praise and blame, and portrayed as a future event on the issues of which a man's eternal life will depend. But the Fourth Gospel goes deeper down than these pictures. It makes the judgement an inward thing, the decision of a man's own conscience when the appeal that the life and character of Jesus make is presented to him. There is no need of any external authority. A man is his own witness and judge. He accepts or rejects the standards and ideals of Jesus, or the values that He sets on different ways of living; and so he is self-judged. Living according to one scale of values is really missing the meaning of life, or death. See the two ways of putting this in Jn. v, 17–30 and Jn. viii, 12–20, xii, 44–50.

There is no doubt that the picture of Jesus given by the writers of the first three Gospels is in agreement with the saying that the author of the Fourth Gospel attributes to Him in the first of these passages, 'He that heareth my

word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not unto judgement, but hath passed out of death into life' (Jn. v, 24), and again with another saying, 'I came that they may have life, and have it in abundance' (Jn. x, 10), that is, here and now.

BOOK FOR REFERENCE

A. NAIRNE. *Life Eternal Here and Now.* (Longmans, Green and Co.)

CHAPTER SIX

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

LUKE vi, 12–20: 'And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray: and he continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples: and he chose from them twelve...and he came down with them, and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples and a great number of the people from all Judæa and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon...and he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said....'

Mt. iv, 25–v, 1: 'And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and from beyond Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying....'

So Luke and Matthew introduce their accounts, and the picture of the Teacher on a plateau of the mountain side with the crowd of listeners around him is one to arrest attention. There is nothing like this Sermon in Mark, and no doubt it was from Q that Luke and Matthew got it. Luke's version of the Sermon is much shorter than Matthew's, only some thirty verses (Lk. vi, 20–49) compared with over a hundred in Matthew (Mt. v–vii). Nearly all that Luke records is included in Matthew's account, though with some differences; and the Sermon in Matthew

may be said to be the Lucan Sermon with three additional passages incorporated in it at three successive points, and a few omissions and rearrangements. The greater part of the matter of these insertions of Matthew, or at least the sayings which are what we should call the 'texts' of them, are found in some other connexion in Luke (a few of them also in Mark). Matthew himself, too, gives some of them in the course of his general narrative, regardless of the fact that he has already utilized them in the Sermon.

If, then, both Luke and Matthew derive their knowledge of the Sermon from Q, it seems probable that it was the shorter form that was contained in Q, based on memory of one actually spoken by Jesus. Not that Jesus may not ever have spoken at such great length, but for two main reasons. The first is that if Luke had had such a long connected discourse before him, it is not likely that he would have broken it up into fragments and scattered them in different places in his Gospel, as on this assumption he must have done. And the second is that it is characteristic of Matthew beyond all the other evangelists to arrange his materials according to their subjects. He takes a particular saying or parable of Jesus, spoken on some particular occasion (as Mark or Luke record it), and round it as a nucleus he makes a collection of kindred sayings or parables in groups of three, five, seven, or nine. So it is probable that in this case he took the actual Sermon in Q as his basis and collected and arranged his extra matter so as to give an exposition, at the very outset of the ministry of Jesus, of the main tenor of his teaching. And he did this in such a way as to bring out vividly its distinctive

characteristics in comparison with the ethical teaching of the Law of Moses and the ideals of righteousness represented by the scribes and Pharisees—this is what the Law says, this is what I say.

Indeed Matthew seems here, as elsewhere in his Gospel, to be influenced by the feeling that there ought to be a new 'Christian' Law in place of the old Law of Moses, a new code of conduct for Christians; and there are traces of the desire to make Jesus the authority for the kind of ecclesiastical legislation which the Church, inevitably as it seems, soon began to frame. Yet, apart from these tendencies, the contrasts he emphasizes between the letter of the old Law and the ideals of Jesus are true, and were obvious, as we have seen, to the scribes and Pharisees as well as to the multitudes at the time. The teaching was new to them.

St Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo in Africa early in the fifth century, was the first, so far as we know, to write a commentary on this section of the Gospel as a whole by itself, and he says of it that 'anyone who gave it pious and sober consideration would find in it the principles of the highest ethics and a perfect standard of Christian life'. It is from this point of view that it ought to be studied. It is Augustine, too, who seems to have been the first to describe it as 'the Sermon on the Mount', though that title was not in general use till the time of the Reformation and then only in the English translations of the Bible (first in the Great Bible of 1540, 'the most excellent and lovynge sermon of Chryst in the Mount: which sermon is the very keye that openeth the understandynge into the lawe'). It is not really a 'sermon', but rather a description of the

character that qualifies for membership of 'the Kingdom of God', setting up as it does moral and spiritual standards and ideals as tests of fitness for the Kingdom.

The first words shew that this is the intention: 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. 'Theirs is', not 'shall be' but 'is'. The Kingdom of heaven belongs to persons of the type of character described in various ways in the discourse that follows. The Kingdom is a society of persons of a particular kind, and the whole discourse has in view the conception of personality as built up by social relationships and manifested in them. It has been called 'the manifesto of the new spiritual society', and it treats the individual always as one who knows that his existence is bound up with other existences, like himself, in relations with whom his life has to be lived. If he is a person, so too they are persons, and the recognition of the 'personality' of others does not make his own 'personality' less, but rather enables him to realize it in its full and proper character. So it is the society that is in view throughout, and it is the right relations of the individual to other individuals in the society that are described. The Christian's practical life in the world is to be guided by the principles laid down. They are the expression of the character of the true disciple. He will act thus and thus, because he is such or such a person.

In all but the first of the 'blessings' ('beatitudes') with which the Sermon begins it is the future tense, 'shall be', that is used: 'They shall be comforted', 'they shall be filled', and so on. The Kingdom referred to is something not yet attained, but to be enjoyed hereafter. No doubt

this was the way in which Jesus spoke, looking forward to the Kingdom to come. But no less clearly it was a present state which He described as qualifying men for membership of the future Kingdom with its blessings. And He declared people of that kind to be divinely happy in anticipation. The consciousness of what is to be theirs in the future is to sustain them in their present state. There is to be a 'great reward' for them 'in heaven'; but already they are to be counted and to count themselves as in a state of bliss. All is well with them.[1]

It is character that makes a man what he is. His acts will usually shew what his character is; but it is what he is aiming at, what he desires, what he has really set his heart on, that counts as his character. This may often be hidden away from other people: he may even be hardly conscious of it himself. But when he is, as it were, 'taken unawares', surprised by some crisis, then he will shew, for good or for bad, his real self. This, no doubt, is why Jesus in His teaching refused to limit Himself to conduct only. The Mosaic Law, like nearly all human systems of Law, dealt only with what men ought to do. Jesus shews what they ought to be. Nothing that He said gives us more insight into His mind in this respect than His saying about the law against murder (Mt. v, 21, 22). Everyone who is angry with his brother stands condemned by this law. We must look to the source of the evil act, and we find it in the feeling of

[1] The Hebrew word used in the O.T.—e.g. Psalm i, 1, ii, 12—is regularly rendered in the LXX by the word μακάριος, 'blessed', which is used of the gods or of men believed to have passed from life in the world to a state of divine well-being.

passionate anger which might lead to the act of killing. It is what is 'in his heart' that determines what a man is, even if he never carries it out in deed. Jesus takes some instances, as examples, to shew that thought and imagination and desire must be under control, as well as acts. And as if to give still sharper point to the teaching, Matthew brings into the Sermon here part of a saying which he found in Mark (ix, 43–48) and gives again further on in his Gospel (Mt. xviii, 8, 9) in the context in which it was in Mark. Man has capacities and powers which he can use for good or for evil, and instruments like eyes and hands with which to do what he wants to do. But it would be better to be blind and not see at all, better to be maimed and without some of the natural powers of a man, than to be led into evil thoughts and desires by eye or hand. Complete renunciation is not the ideal, not a counsel of perfection, but it may be the only way of saving a man's soul from destruction (Mt. v, 29, 30).

In the teaching of Jesus it is the direction of thought and desire that is all important. In the parable of the Tax-Collector and the Pharisee a contrast is drawn between the man who knows that he is not what he ought to be and yet longs to be it, and the man who is satisfied that he is fulfilling all his moral and religious duties and is not aiming at being better than he is (Lk. xviii, 9–14). And in the Sermon on the Mount the sayings 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness' (Mt. v, 6) and 'Be ye (or, ye shall be) perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt. v, 48) make the desire to reach out to the highest possible ideal the qualification for the Kingdom,

rather than the attainment of a respectable level of life and conduct.

It is an attitude to life and a way of living now that He meant to suggest to those who would be His disciples.

Some have thought that, because He believed the end of the world as it is was near at hand and expected the Kingdom to come at once, and did not think of human life and society as going on indefinitely, His teaching was only meant to apply to the short interval of expectation, before the Kingdom came. And others have thought that He had only in view members of His own Society, the Church, and meant His teaching for them only. Whatever the rest of the world did, they were to act as He said. Both these views depend on the idea that He was laying down rules to be obeyed literally.

It is much more probable, however, that He intended to hold out ideals and to state in vivid and striking ways the principles which He thought ought to govern the relations of men one with another, as being all together the family of their Father in heaven.

It is usual to speak of the system of Christian Ethics, and it is possible to derive such a system from the life and teaching of Jesus. When Matthew grouped His sayings together as he did in the Sermon on the Mount, he had in mind such a system.

But the teaching of Jesus was not formal or systematic, and it is best to take each saying by itself as an indication of an attitude to life and a spirit in which to deal with every question that arises in the ordinary course of life in the world with all its changing circumstances.

Some of His sayings even Luke and Matthew understood in different ways. Take the first 'beatitude'. Jesus said 'Blessed are the poor'. Luke understood Him literally, and he drives the point home by the first of the 'woes' (Lk. vi, 24) which he alone adds to the beatitudes. Jesus may have meant this, for the record of His teaching on other occasions shews that He thought that riches brought with them temptations as well as responsibilities from which the simpler life of poorer folk was free (see Chapter III). But Matthew took Him to mean 'poor' in the sense the equivalent word often has in the Psalms, namely those who are 'lowly-minded' towards GOD, not proud and self-sufficient, but feeling their own littleness and dependence on GOD. When the Emperor Julian (A.D. 361–363) persecuted Christians and confiscated their property, he said he was giving them a chance of winning the blessing pronounced on the poor. But if Matthew's interpretation is not right, then we have in Luke's version, not advice to the rich to strip themselves of all they have, but a warning to them that their riches will not help to make them fit for the Kingdom. The other evidence in the Gospels shews that it was very far from the mind of Jesus to turn the poor against the rich or make them dissatisfied with their state of life. They are nearer the Kingdom as they are: yet riches shall be theirs in the future. It sounds rather paradoxical.

It is just these paradoxes of which the teaching of Jesus is full that make it so lively and interesting. You cannot be a Christian by rule. But if you let the paradoxes sink in, and make the spirit of them your own, you will usually

know what a Christian ought to feel in this or that situation as it arises.

Let us take a few instances.

Are you to 'give to everyone that asks you' (Lk. vi, 30; cf. Mt. v, 42)? No: if you do, you pauperize him, you encourage him to depend on begging instead of working for a living. It would be thoroughly bad for him. But, on the other hand, stint yourself if necessary to help a man, who is 'down on his luck' or out of work, to tide over a difficult time. Give out and out as freely as you will for good objects. If you are an employer, do not try to cut down wages to the barest minimum to increase your own profits; and as a ratepayer, pay your poor rate willingly and do not grudge the unfortunate pauper a few extra comforts beyond mere food and lodging.

Are you to 'lend, expecting nothing back' (Lk. vi, 35; cf. Mt. v, 42)? For centuries Christians thought that lending money on interest (or 'usury') was wrong; though in the Middle Ages various expedients were devised by which an equivalent to interest was secured. Now, our whole system of commerce depends on usury of one kind or another, and if you invest what money you have you are lending it on interest. But you would act on the moral principle of the saying if you were content with moderate profits in your business or remuneration for your work; and laws to regulate interest on loans in proportion to risk of loss, prohibiting exorbitant interest, are an instance of the way in which under the present conditions of life the spirit of the saying can be made effective.

Are you to 'turn the other cheek' (Lk. vi, 29; Mt. v, 39)

and 'resist not evil (or, him that is evil)'? No doubt there have often been Christians who tried to keep these sayings in the letter; but the Church has never made a law on the subject as it did on usury. On the contrary, we have laws to protect persons from assault and laws designed to check evil and evildoers of many kinds. We judge the civilization of a country by the extent to which it secures a high standard of social order, and personal liberty, and respect for individual rights. We believe we learn from Jesus that a kind of sacredness attaches to every man, that he is an end in himself and not intended to be a means to other men's ends or the victim of the stronger. If Christians are to be humble and passive when their persons are insulted, must not other Christians resent for them the infringement of a principle of their belief and seek to check it? What did Jesus mean? It is important to notice that He hardly ever says what is to be done on any one particular occasion. His words are of much more general application. And this is the main point.

People have often taken the sayings of Jesus too solemnly. They have not allowed Him any sense of humour. There were times, no doubt, when He was stern and austere; but there must often have been a smile and a twinkle in the eye as He brought out His startling sayings. And all this is lost when they are written down. If we are to understand Him, we must realize that He was full of life, and that He was not a philosopher making a system of ethics in his study, but a very human being talking to men and women as the spirit moved Him. And of all that He must have said we have only the best remembered

bits, usually just by themselves without the rest of the conversation.

But just because the sayings are so vivacious, we have to look below the surface and try to catch the spirit of them, and then, if we would be guided by Him, see what the principle behind them or in them is. The principle must not be lost sight of just because to follow out the saying in detail nowadays might be inconsistent with some other principle equally important, or even be bad and demoralizing for ourselves or the other person concerned.

So it is with 'turn the other cheek' and 'love your enemies'. Jesus did mean us not to resent affronts or insults, and He did mean us to exercise love even at the sacrifice of our own self-preservation or what others would regard as self-respect. And so, among those who have been fashioned by the spirit of His life and teaching, there has been seen a type of character in which humility and dignity are blended, and a new kind of 'great-mindedness', confronted by which the Greek and Roman ideals of the great man seem petty.

For detailed study of the Sermon the following analysis of it might be used.

Analysis of the Sermon on the Mount

§ i. v, 1–12 (+ 13–16). Description of the ideal of character in the form of Beatitudes (Mt. 7 or 8, Lk. 4) and of its value to the world (the salt of the earth and the light of the world).

§ ii. *vv.* 17–48. This ideal in relation to earlier Hebrew conceptions as seen in the precepts of the Law—*vv.* 17–20 in general shewing that they were only rudimentary and partial expressions of the true ethical principles which rule Christian righteousness,

and then *vv.* 21–48 giving five particular illustrations of the deeper sense—viz.

(*a*) *vv.* 21–32, evil thoughts and desires come under the same condemnation as evil acts;

(*b*) *vv.* 33–37, truthfulness required without the safeguard of a formal oath;

(*c*) *vv.* 38–42, willing acceptance of injustice is to supersede the primitive rule of exactly equivalent retribution;

(*d*) *vv.* 43–48, insufficiency of current standards shewn by appeal to God's character and action.

(Of this part of the Sermon only (*c*) and (*d*) are in Luke's version.)

§ iii. vi, 1–24. The new ideal shewn in the new way of treating what were held to be three chief duties of religious life (viz. Almsgiving, *vv.* 2–4; Prayer, *vv.* 5–15; Fasting, *vv.* 16–18), which are to be regarded as secrets between the individual and God. (There are no parallels to these in Luke except the Lord's Prayer which he gives in another connexion.) And three sayings like parables with the same idea (*vv.* 19–21, the treasure in heaven; *vv.* 22–23, singleness of aim; *v.* 24, singleness of service).

§ iv. vi, 25–vii, 6. Three warnings: (*a*) against anxiety, vi, 25–34; (*b*) against censoriousness, vii, 1–5; (*c*) against profanity, vii, 6.

§ v. vii, 7–23. Three injunctions: (*a*) on petition, *vv.* 7–12; (*b*) on the need of decision, *vv.* 13, 14; (*c*) on life as the test of character, *vv.* 15–23.

§ vi. vii, 24–27. A parable to shew the permanence of the ideal described.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

G. Heinrici. *Die Bergpredigt begriffsgeschichtlich untersucht.* (Leipzig, A. Edelmann, 1905.)

G. Friedlander. *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount.* (G. Routledge and Sons, 1911.)

H. Rashdall. *Conscience and Christ.* (Duckworth and Co., 1916.)

C. Gore. *The Sermon on the Mount.* (Murray, 1896.)

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NARRATIVES OF MIRACLES

THROUGHOUT the whole Gospel story Jesus is depicted as one through whom a divine power was working. In Peter's speech to the people at Jerusalem in Acts ii, 22 He is described as 'a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which *God did through him* in the midst of you'; and again in Acts x, 38 there is almost the same description—'Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with holy spirit and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for *God was with him'*. The Gospel picture shews Him as one who was regarded as having, as His own, power over men's minds and bodies that seemed to be miraculous; and the narratives of these miracles are a large part not only of the Gospels but of the witness they bear to the character of Jesus. Without these narratives we should not only have much less picturesque and arresting incident in the story of His life, but we should have much less evidence of the actual impression He produced. Whether everything happened or not just as it is described, these stories help to shew what Jesus really was. If they do not give us a photograph, they help us to a true portrait and are invaluable as a picture of His personality. This was the kind of thing people believed about Him. Particular beliefs are always dependent on knowledge and experience in general, though as regards many beliefs we

hold it is the knowledge and experience of other people that we have to trust. In the time of our Lord no one had the knowledge of natural phenomena that modern science has given us. There was nothing like the same idea of 'laws' of Nature. The world, to the people living in it then, was a world in which anything could happen, and no one knew how it came about. Everything was referred either to chance, or to the direct action of GOD or spirits with superhuman powers—the evil in the world especially to evil spirits, 'demons' or 'devils', of whom there were legions (Mk. v, 9; Lk. viii, 30).

Disease in particular was believed to be caused by these evil spirits. It was believed that there were demons of fever and deafness and dumbness and other maladies, and that they could enter into human beings and 'possess' them. In order to cure the person afflicted by the disease, the demon must be driven out. This could only be done by bringing to bear on him—not on the person but on the demon—the power of a superior spirit, mightier in the hierarchy of spirits than himself, whose order to quit he must obey. It was necessary to know the right spirit to invoke in each case and in his name adjure the evil spirit to go. So there were 'doctors' of that time whose books of prescriptions included what we should call magical formulas to be used in such cases to 'exorcize' the evil spirit, and these 'exorcists' were often successful in curing their patients, as quack-doctors are today. It was this theory of the cause of disease that was generally accepted at the time and underlies the narratives of the Gospels.

Jesus at least acted on this theory, and it was as a great

exorcist of evil spirits that His fame first spread among the people. In dealing with demoniacs He used no magical formula like ordinary exorcists.[1] He treats them as being under some immoral influence which only the power of God can counteract, and He seems to regard them as having lost the power to will and needing some force to act on them in spite of themselves. Yet in His treatment of them there is implicit an appeal to their own true personality as distinguished from the devil that must be expelled. Jesus ranges Himself against the evil spirit, and it was His personal influence that secured the victory. What He relied on was the power of faith in the superiority of God, who willed nothing but good for His children, over the Devil. Spirit is pitted against spirit. 'With authority' ('and power', Lk.) He commands the unclean spirits and they 'obey Him' (or 'come out', Lk.). See Mk. i, 27.

In the summary statements (Mk. i, 32; Lk. vi, 17 f.; Mt. x, 8) He is said to have cast out many devils; but particulars are given of only four cases in Mark (Mk. i, 23–28, Lk. iv, 33–37; Mk. v, 1–20, Lk. viii, 26–39, Mt. viii, 28–34; Mk. ix, 14–29, Lk. ix, 37–43, Mt. xvii, 14–21; Mk. vii, 24–30, Mt. xv, 21–28), and two, or possibly three, others in Luke and Matthew (Lk. xi, 14, 15, Mt. xii, 22 and probably the same case in Mt. ix, 32–34; Lk. xiii, 10–17). In only three of these six cases are any symptoms described which imply violent 'fits' (epilepsy or mania). The

[1] The survival in two narratives of the Aramaic words He used in addressing the patients (*Taleitha Koum*, Mk. v, 41, and *Ephphatha*, Mk. vii, 34) may be due to popular feeling that there was a virtue in the actual words by which the cure was effected.

cases added by Luke and Matthew are similar to cases in Mark which are not attributed to demonic possession, and this shews perhaps that Luke and Matthew (or their source Q) tended to account for all disease by 'possession' and to regard all our Lord's cures as a part of the war He waged with the Spirit of Evil.

Modern medical science does not assume evil spirits (that is, intelligent beings of a different order from men) as the cause of diseases of the body, such as fevers and deafness and blindness and paralysis; nor yet of diseases of the mind, such as mania and epilepsy. There is today a tendency rather to trace back diseases of the mind to physical causes. But we are still very far from knowing all the causes of mental derangement. When we say of a man that he is 'not himself' or 'out of his mind', we are saying that he is under some influence alien from his nature, and foreign and hostile to his true character. Something or other from outside has got into him, and must be got rid of. It may be a microbe, or it may be an idea. 'Body' and 'mind' react so closely on one another all the time that nothing that affects the one can fail to affect the other also. A disordered body may set up mental disease, and a disordered mind in the patient himself seems often to be a cause of physical disease.

Jesus was not a medical man, either of His own age or of ours, and we may ignore the theory of demonic possession. We shall go to the doctors of today to learn the general rules and principles we ought to follow in order to keep our bodies in healthy condition, and most of them will tell us that we have to see that our minds are healthy too, if we

are to keep our bodies 'fit'. We have to exercise and train our minds and control our thoughts in the right way in order to be well. And this is where the power of Jesus was certainly exercised. It was His own trust in God and His own confidence in the victory of good over evil that He passed on to others. They caught it from Him. He was able to drive out the fear by which they were possessed and bring back calm and hope to their minds, and so to create or restore the conditions favourable to the health of their bodies.

The miracles recorded of Him can be grouped in two chief classes:

(1) those affecting persons, cures of diseases, and

(2) those affecting the physical conditions of the world or 'Nature'; though these are never mere wonders, but always have the relief of persons in distress in view.

Jesus always refused to gratify people who wanted Him to work a miracle just to shew His power or justify Himself (see Mk. viii, 11, 12; Lk. xi, 29; Mt. xvi, 4). He would not depend on miracles (cf. the story of the Temptation in Chapter II). He did not wish to base the teaching He had to give, and His appeal to men's hearts and wills, on the cures He could perform. He would tell the persons He had healed or their friends not to tell anyone about it (e.g. Mk. v, 43, vii, 36). Moreover He did not wish the power to be regarded as personal and peculiar to Himself. The one occasion on which He is recorded to have exulted is on the return of disciples whom He had sent out on an experimental mission by themselves, when they reported to Him their success in curing diseases in the words 'even the

demons are subject to us in thy name' (Lk. x, 17–24; Mt. xi, 25–27). The cures were signs to Jesus that the power of GOD was asserting its sovereignty over the powers of evil in the world. A new era was beginning, and He found proof of it in the fact that it was not only He Himself through whom the cures could be wrought.

The power of exorcizing demons and healing diseases could be exercised effectively by His disciples, or even, without His disapproval, by one who was not a disciple (Mk. ix, 38–40; Lk. ix, 49, 50).[1] He attributed the cure not to any power of His own but to GOD, bidding the people cured give thanks to Him. See, for example, the case of the Gerasene demoniac whom He bids go and tell his friends 'all that the Lord has done for him' (Mk. v, 19). Luke (viii, 39) gives the true sense by substituting 'God' for 'the Lord'. Again, in the case of the paralytic borne by four, it is said (Mk. ii, 12) that all the people 'glorified God', recognizing, that is, GOD as the source of the power, and giving thanks to Him. This is an aspect of the 'miracles' that is retained by Matthew but in particular emphasized by Luke, alike in his independent narratives (e.g. Lk. v, 17, vii, 16, xvii, 18) and by additions to narratives he takes over from Mark (e.g. Lk. xviii, 43 compared with Mk. x, 52).

Again, according to Mark (vi, 5) Jesus could not effect any cures unless the sufferers, or their friends for them, shewed that they had faith that they could be cured. And from some of the stories we can see that He adopted a method of treatment which would stimulate in the patient the expectation of cure and so enlist in the task all his own

[1] Matthew omits this.

capacities for recovery. Jesus let expectation and suggestion work before He gave the order to use the lame legs or the paralysed hand.

The narratives are usually very condensed. The bare story is told as shortly as possible, often as though the cure was easy and instantaneous. But some of the stories shew that it was not easily, nor without strain and cost to Himself, that Jesus exercised the healing power. There was on His part not only sympathy with the sufferer and his friends—the taking upon Himself some of their suffering and sharing it with them, but also an output of nervous energy brought to bear on the patient. It is Mark especially who sets facts of this kind before us. Matthew's narratives, even when copied from Mark, omit these vivid bits of the historical setting; just as they tend to omit also little details about things Jesus did in the course of the cure, like touching the parts affected. It would seem that some Christians at an early date were not interested in the means which Jesus adopted in His cures, which were in general use at the time,[1] and preferred to think of Him as having only to 'say the word' and it was done. This is a view of the matter which inspires the fine story of the centurion and his servant which comes from the Q collection (Lk. vii, 2–10; Mt. viii, 5–13), but it is

[1] A remarkable illustration of the kind of means that could be used is found in the story of the blind man in Jn. ix, 6: 'he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle and anointed his eyes with the clay'. Matthew tells of the touching of the eyes in a narrative of his own (ix, 27–31) and in the case of the two blind men (Mt. xx, 29–34, from Mk. x, 46–52).

probably less close to the historical facts than are Mark's accounts.

The demands for faith which Jesus made were probably intended, and understood at the time, as demands for faith in the supreme power of God, always active and working but needing a response from man before it can be effective in the restoration of powers that man has lost. He appeals for faith and attributes the cure to the patient's faith. He also tries to secure the co-operation of all who are concerned—the patient's relations and friends as well as his own. He desired an intense vital sympathy and the fullest possible force of spirit to be brought to bear on the end in view. In the two or three cases which can be called cures wrought 'at a distance' it must be assumed that the sick person was aware that his friends were seeking for him the help of Jesus and that he was himself in a condition of expectancy: but Jesus takes pains to rouse the faith and hope of the friends and join them with Him in the output of psychic power by which the cure is made possible. If the powers set working were powers of God it was not necessary for Jesus to be locally in the presence of the sick person. It was His part to stimulate in men the consciousness of a divine power and life in which they might share and so to be the medium by which it became available for them and operative in them. They in turn could mediate it to others. In the things of the mind and the spirit we are all 'mediators' to one another. This fact of mediation plays a large part in later Christian doctrine. It is implied in all 'intercessory' prayer, and in our prayers for people who are in distress or danger or sickness we are trying to be the

means of bringing the power and love of GOD to their help in a way not essentially different from that in which cures of physical disease were 'mediated' by Jesus 'at a distance' with the co-operation of others.

Besides these narratives of cures of diseases of various types, not all of them of a hysterical or mental kind or attributed to evil spirits, there is one case narrated in the Gospel of Mark in which Jesus was believed to have restored life to a girl who was dead, the daughter of one Jaïrus; and the story is copied by Luke and Matthew (Mk. v, 21–24 and 35–43; Lk. viii, 40–42 and 49–56; Mt. ix, 18, 19 and 23–25). Yet in this case Jesus Himself said that she was not dead, but asleep; and it may have been a case of coma.

So, too, may have been the only other case of raising from the dead narrated in the Synoptic Gospels—the story of the widow's son at Nain which Luke alone narrates (Lk. vii, 11–17). Coma has often been mistaken for death, and in the East burial commonly follows quickly on death.

The splendid story of the raising of Lazarus comes to us in a Gospel written later than Mark and Luke (Jn. xi, 1–46). The miracles recorded in this Gospel are more wonderful than those of the same kind in the earlier Gospels. Just a few representative cases are given—the infirm man had been thirty-eight years in his infirmity (Jn. v, 5), the blind man had been blind from birth (ix, 1), Lazarus had already been dead four days (xi, 39). Though the stories read as if they were photographs from the life, it is possible that the author intended them to be taken as symbolic pictures of the power and 'light' and 'life' that

a disciple of Jesus actually found his discipleship brought him. 'Whereas I was blind, now I see' (Jn. ix, 25), or as St Paul put it, 'I have strength for everything [there's nothing I cannot do] in him that enableth me' (Phil. iv, 13).

In a separate class by themselves are the narratives that ascribe to Jesus miraculous powers over inanimate things. But it is only from our modern point of view that the cases are different from the others, and there is nothing in the Gospels to suggest that they involved any special effort or were regarded as specially remarkable. They are represented as being for Jesus simple and natural actions that set men wondering. There are very few of these stories of 'miracles wrought on Nature'. It has been said that if we, with our modern knowledge and ideas, had been present on the various occasions, we might not have given the same account of what happened; and the actual facts may have been misreported or misunderstood. The narratives in this class are as follows:

(1) The stilling of the Tempest on the lake (Mk. iv, 35–41; Lk. viii, 22–25; Mt. viii, 18).

(2) The miraculous draught of fishes (Lk. v, 1–11, which is probably connected with the story in Jn. xxi, 1–13).

(3) The stater in the fish's mouth (Mt. xvii, 24 ff.).

Of these three cases Dr Westcott wrote: 'The unexpected haul, the sudden lull of a storm in a mountain lake, the coin in the fish's mouth, are incidents to which common experience can furnish abundant parallels. The miracle lies in the circumstances and not in the mere fact'. None of the incidents need have been miraculous in the ordinary

sense of the word. The saying about the stater (shekel) may have been humorous, a way of telling Peter to go and catch fish to sell and get the money wanted. But Matthew understood it to imply supernatural knowledge on the part of Jesus, just as Luke understood the story of the great catch of fish which he records.

(4) The multiplication of loaves and fish, of which we have duplicate accounts—a shorter one giving the number as 4000, Mark (viii, 1–9), which Matthew (xv, 32–39) but not Luke repeats, and a longer one giving the number as 5000 (Mk. vi, 39 ff.; Lk. ix, 13 ff.; Mt. xiv, 16 ff., with Jn. vi, 1–15).

(5) The change of water into wine in Jn. ii, 1–11.

Various suggestions have been made as to the facts that underlay the first of these two stories. It may have been that a metaphor used by Jesus was misunderstood, or that He had been preaching to a crowd in a desert place and they had said that He fed them with 'the bread of life' and they felt no hunger, though the only food they had among them was a few loaves and fishes. (See Jn. vi, 35, 'I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger'.) Or the origin of the story may have been a symbolic distribution of bread suggestive of the eucharist of later times (as it is interpreted in Jn. vi). A story of a similar kind is related of the prophet Elisha in 2 Kings iv, 42–44.

(6) The withering of the fig-tree (Mk. xi, 12–14, 20–25 where the withering is noticed next day and Mt. xxi, 18–22 where it happens instantly). For this miracle Luke substitutes the parable of the Barren Fig-Tree (Lk. xiii, 6–9). The narrative has close affinity with tales related in

the apocryphal gospel of the Infancy and is the only one of its kind in the Synoptic Gospels. We seem to have Luke's authority for regarding it as unhistorical. It does not fit in with the portraiture of Jesus in the rest of the New Testament.

Besides these there is the story of Jesus walking on the water which is told by Mark (vi, 45–52), repeated with additions that heighten the effect by Matthew (xiv, 22–23) and, in language that makes a non-miraculous interpretation of the story possible, by John (vi, 15–21).[1] Luke does not repeat this story but (iv, 16–30) tells of an occasion on which Jesus vanished from the midst of a crowd. These are the only narratives in all our Gospels that represent our Lord's natural body as being possessed of capacities different in kind from those of ordinary human bodies. At an early time there were people who, just because they believed that Jesus was the Christ, or a divine being, could not believe that He actually had a human body, or, as they put it, had 'come in flesh' (see Jn. iv, 2, 3). But it is an essential part of the doctrine of the Church about Him that He had complete manhood and a genuinely human body like all human bodies; and these stories probably have their place in our Gospels because they convey a vivid picture of the impression He produced of being able to come to the help of His followers and assure them of His presence, however great their need, and to baffle His

[1] The phrase used in Mark and in John may mean not 'on the sea' but 'by the sea-side'; but Matthew's phrase means 'on the sea', and the same sense is probably intended by John as well as by Mark.

opponents, as at the end of His life He triumphed over death.

If today we read all these stories as true pictures of what He is able to be to His disciples we shall find in them the value they have for us. They are all examples of His power to remedy the ills of life in the world as it is, pain, disease, hunger, anxiety, despair, and to bring to men knowledge of 'the things that belong unto peace' (Lk. xix, 42).

ADDITIONAL NOTE

Specially notable as shewing that the cures were not effected easily are the narratives in Mk. viii, 22–26 (a blind man, where the cure is not effected at once, but in two stages) and Mk. vii, 32–36 (a deaf and dumb man).[1] Neither of these stories is repeated by either Luke or Matthew, but Matthew's case of the blind and dumb demoniac (Mt. xii, 22) and Luke's of the dumb demoniac (Lk. xi, 14) are probably derived from Mark's account, with all the details which they did not care to repeat omitted. With these narratives should be read, as cases of cure at a distance, the stories of the Syrophœnician girl (Mk. vii, 24–30; Mt. xv, 21–28) and the centurion's servant (Lk. vii, 1–10; Mt. viii, 5–13), of which the story of the nobleman's son in Jn. iv, 46 ff. is probably another version.

We have, also, to remember that the stories do not come from people with scientific training, and the diseases may not always have their right names given them. A distinction

[1] It is notable how in both these cases Jesus takes the patient away by himself. So, too, in the case of Jaïrus's daughter (Mk. v, 37) He lets only Peter and James and John be present.

is sometimes made between 'organic' and 'functional' diseases. If an organ is destroyed, no way of restoring it is known: but when the organ is intact but not acting properly it may be made to 'function', to do the work it ought to do, again. None of these distinctions were in the minds of the people who told about the 'mighty works' Jesus did, and the authors of our Gospels make no discrimination. They tell of ailments similar to some that are curable today by suggestion and faith-healing, and equally readily they tell of some of which modern medicine knows no cure. Few of the stories contain anything of the mere wonder-working kind that we find in the later 'apocryphal' gospels, where tales that are quite incredible are told of the ways in which Jesus acted. But, nevertheless, there are numerous references to beliefs of the people that the healing power was something belonging to Jesus which He could use or not as He liked, and popular opinion attributed to His person a sanctity and virtue which might be called 'magical'. He was Himself, so to say, the talisman. His touch could convey a blessing or a cure (Mk. x, 13; viii, 22). It might not be necessary even for Him to touch them. It was enough that they should touch Him (Mk. iii, 10, vi, 56, 'as many as touched him were made whole'; Lk. vi, 19, 'and all the multitude sought to touch Him: for power came forth from him, and healed them all'). This popular belief is shewn in its strongest form in the story of the woman in Mk. v, 25 ff. and Lk. viii, 43 ff., in which Jesus Himself is said to have felt power go forth from Him when He was touched. Matthew curtails the story and omits this part. Perhaps its historical basis is the memory that

Jesus did find His healing work exhausting. Apart from this one story there is nothing in the Gospels that suggests that Jesus Himself would have sanctioned this kind of popular belief which is seen again in a still more exaggerated form in some of the stories in Acts, e.g. v, 15, xix, 12, and at later periods in connexion with 'relics' of 'martyrs' and 'saints'.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

J. Wendland. *Miracles and Christianity*. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

B. F. Westcott. *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*. (H. R. Allenson.)

E. O. Davies. *The Miracles of Jesus*. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

F. R. Tennant. *Miracle and its Philosophical Presuppositions*. (Cambridge University Press.)

O. Weinreich. *Antike Heilungswunder*. (A. Töpelmann, Giessen.)

R. Reitzenstein. *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*. (B. G. Teubner, Leipzig.)

E. A. Abbott. *Through Nature to Christ*, Appendix. (Macmillan and Co.)

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE RESURRECTION

THERE are two stories of the Passion, one in Mark, which is followed by Matthew, and one in Luke. These two stories had better be read as they stand, without attempting to harmonize them (Mk. xiv, 32–xv, 47 || Mt. xxvi, 36–xxvii, 61 and Lk. xxii, 39–xxiii, 56).

As the story represents the course of events, Jesus was the victim of the jealousy and hatred and the political fears of the religious leaders of the Jews. 'Vested interests' were at stake. There was all the fear of losing place and power: 'He or we must go'. He was a frank critic of much of their teaching and practice. The Levite and the Pharisee are pilloried for ever in the Parable of the Good Samaritan and of the Pharisee and the Publican. The way of love that Jesus preached was a revolutionary doctrine in their eyes. He used them as examples of what ought not to be done. He ridiculed their ideas of what were important religious duties and observances. He professed to teach a higher way. It was true that He paid the Temple tax, and sent lepers to the priests and kept the festivals; but He broke the rules about the Sabbath. If He did not intend to rouse the people to revolt, He was causing a very dangerous state of feeling among them. In the eyes of the official class He was a dangerous dreamer or fanatic and His teaching was likely to lead to a popular rising to free Palestine from its

Roman conquerors, which would endanger their own political power. Such popular risings were not uncommon and they had no chance of success. From the point of view of the Jewish religious leaders, the claim to be Messiah was blasphemy and punishable by death. (Blasphemy, it must be remembered, is still punishable by law though not so severely as then; and, again, the Church has frequently burnt heretics. Always the charge whether of blasphemy or of heresy has meant that the person accused gave utterance to opinions which his accusers regarded as outrageously contrary to the truth about sacred things.)

Jesus saw the failure of His mission and His own death threatening, and He went to meet the threat, anxious but resolute. The saying at the Supper (Mk. xiv, 25), 'I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until...', leaves open the possibility that the Kingdom of God might be manifested at once. The scene in Gethsemane shews that He still cherished hope of a different issue from that which actually occurred. Throughout the trial and the closing scene with its indignity and torture He maintains His resolute bearing, but the cry on the Cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Mk. xv, 34; Mt. xxvii, 46), sounds a note of such despair that other accounts (Luke and John) of the Passion omit it.

It has been pointed out that it is the first verse of a Psalm that ends with confident praise, and the triumphant issue may have been in the mind of Jesus. If it were not so, but in the last moment of consciousness He lost the sense of trust in God in which He had lived His life, then He had to endure the supreme tragedy of human experience—to

feel that the ideal you have followed all your life is only a will o' the wisp, you have failed in what you had set your heart on, or you are deserted by the one friend and helper on whom throughout your life you have relied, for whom a whole life has been spent. And when the incident has been understood in this way, this 'dereliction of the Cross' has figured largely among the sufferings which Christ bore 'for us men and for our salvation'.

He felt He was alone. There is a kind of solitariness in the deepest religious experiences that come to men. Jesus had often felt this; but He had been sustained by the conviction that GOD was with Him. Now He is left all alone. He, who had been confident that the Love of GOD would break the power of evil entrenched in the selfishness of men, and that His own death would inaugurate the coming of a new age, in which GOD would vindicate the truth of His gospel of Love, failed in His confidence at the last. All seemed to be lost. The disciples had already forsaken Him and fled. Only some of the women were looking on afar off. Had this been the end, we should have known nothing about Jesus to-day. But between this tragedy and His triumph stands the fact which is described in the stories of the Resurrection. It was the belief that Jesus who had been crucified and died on the Cross had risen again to life, or had been raised by GOD (for both ways of putting the belief were used), that restored to the small company of His disciples their belief in Him, and finally convinced them that He was the Messiah and would come again in glory to establish the Kingdom of GOD and bestow its blessings on all who had faith in Him and followed the

way He announced. It was this belief that brought back to life their faith in Him, and made them eager to tell to others the story of Jesus and the gospel He taught, fearless in face of opposition and ridicule, ready to face the charge of being revolutionaries ('turning the world upside down', Acts xvii, 6) and to lose their own lives, if need be, in the cause.

Individual disciples and small groups of them together were convinced that they had seen Jesus and heard Him speak to them.

The Gospels have different stories of these appearances (Mk. xvi, 1–8; Mt. xviii, 1–10 and 16–20; Lk. xxiv, 1–53). Mark tells only of the visit of the three women to the tomb, their finding it empty, and an angel's announcement to them that He had risen and would shew Himself in Galilee; but it is possible that the last page of the Gospel was lost and that there was in it an account of an appearance to some of the disciples in Galilee, as there is in Matthew (xxviii, 16–20) who seems to have been mainly dependent on Mark in this part of his Gospel, though (unlike Mark) he represents the women as hurrying off to tell the disciples and being met by Jesus on their way, so that he tells of an appearance both in Jerusalem and in Galilee.

Luke, on the other hand, has nothing to say about any appearance in Galilee, but relates other stories of appearances at Jerusalem.

In any case it is not profitable to try to piece the stories together so as to form a consecutive narrative. It is better to take each one by itself as a description of what was felt by some of those who had been most intimate with Jesus

and to try to understand what it was they felt about Him, leaving alone the difficult question as to what it was exactly that happened. It is, for example, only Luke who says that He ate and drank with them (Luke xxiv, 36–43; Acts x, 41 and probably i, 4), and the true historical memory that underlies this very materialistic detail may be that it was when they were together at their supper in the evening that they had the sense of His being with them. If some of the stories are more like pictures or parables than actual photographs in words, they undoubtedly represent the conviction of some of the earliest disciples that Jesus was alive again and able to make His will known to them through His spirit. And it was this conviction that was proof to them that Jesus was appointed by GOD to reveal to men the truth and be the means by which they might become His sons and members of His Kingdom, winning Salvation. What Jesus was in His life and what He taught was what GOD wanted men to be.

Read the stories one by one as they stand. (Note Matthew's love of earthquakes and Luke's stress on physical proofs.)

In the past, from the time when the Gospels were current, Christians have commonly accepted all these stories as true descriptions of events that actually happened, and of the ways by which the belief in the Resurrection was established. Much careful thought and labour has been spent in the attempt to understand and explain the exact sequence of the various appearances from the first to the last, and to harmonize what seem to be inconsistencies.

Free criticism of the stories, by those who profess them-

selves Christians, on the lines which modern scholars follow in studying literature and history that is not sacred, and the literature and history of religions other than the Christian Religion, has only lately become general. The stories have been taken in the past at their 'face value'. Today, too, there are many scholars who think that the difficulty of accounting for the belief in the Resurrection in the earliest group of disciples is insuperable, unless the facts were as they are stated (namely, that the Tomb in which Jesus was laid was found empty and His body sublimated, so that He was able to materialize it and dematerialize it at will).

Others are of opinion that the fact was that Jesus in the spirit made His influence felt so strongly by some of His disciples that they did not distinguish between bodily and spiritual presence. He was there, and they saw Him, and heard Him, as they had seen and heard Him in His lifetime. He came to them, singly or in little groups gathered together; and the impression on some of them was so vivid as to produce immediate conviction, and the conviction of the few was contagious and spread to others, who had not themselves 'seen' or 'heard'.

Here again, as in the earlier stories of the experiences of Jesus Himself, such as the Baptism and the Temptation, it would be necessary to distinguish between the fact of the experience and the description of it which the person undergoing it gave. And on this theory some of the stories and the details of them, including the story of the empty tomb, would have arisen at a later time, after the fact of the Resurrection had become central in the faith of the

Christian community, as natural inferences from their experience of His presence with them. They would be intended as honest explanations of the belief which was established. He had triumphed over Death; He had shewn Himself able to make Himself felt by His disciples to be alive and to raise again their enthusiastic faith in Him. He had escaped from the tomb; 'Where, grave, is thy victory?' There was the prophecy that 'God's holy One' should not be left 'to see corruption'—a prophecy that may well have been quoted by Peter in his first sermon to the people after Pentecost as reported in Acts (ii, 27), and as soon as it was applied to Jesus (see what was said in Chapter I) would have encouraged belief in the empty tomb.

Most of the stories were probably told again and again long before they were written down. It is common experience that stories of wonders do not lose in the telling, and all would allow that some 'embroidery' may have been added. But the stories, as we have them in the Gospels, are so circumstantial and so simply expressed, that readers of them may well find it difficult to believe that they are not records of actual events exactly as they occurred. They may be familiar with the skill of the storyteller in fiction from the fourteenth century B.C. to the twentieth century A.D., but they will feel that these stories of the Resurrection of Jesus are based on actual experience.

In the present state of our knowledge that is a reasonable position to take up in regard to them. But there is another position that many believers in Jesus occupy today that is also reasonable. That the power of GOD was actually working in Jesus ('God was in Christ reconciling the

world to Himself', 2 Cor. v, 19), no one who believes in GOD can doubt. Nor again can anyone doubt that the spirit of Jesus has been a living power in the world ever since, inspiring men and women to high and noble life and service to mankind. The only question that can arise is whether the remarkable phenomena described in the stories of the Resurrection are to be regarded as having actually happened as they are told, or whether the manifestations of the Risen Jesus were made in the Spirit to the spirits of His disciples. In the present state of our knowledge of the ways in which GOD works in the world, in and through men, and of the ways in which disciples of Jesus ever since have become convinced of His spiritual presence and will and power to help them, it is reasonable to suppose that the first manifestations were of the same spiritual order as the later ones, and in any case not of a physical, visible, audible kind.

CHAPTER NINE

POPULAR OPINION ABOUT JESUS IN HIS LIFETIME

'TRULY this man was a son of God' (Mk. xv, 39). So said the centurion in charge of the Crucifixion. It was a soldier's estimate of Jesus, with nothing to know Him by but the way in which He bore Himself through the trial and the execution. The phrase 'a son of God' on a Roman soldier's lips would mean little more than a great man, a hero. Luke gives his saying as 'Certainly this was a righteous man' (Lk. xxiii, 47). Matthew keeps Mark's version. Our translation 'the' son of GOD makes the centurion say what he could not have meant. It gives us, however, the estimate of Jesus at which Christians had arrived at the time at which Mark was written, some thirty years at least after the events. It is worth while looking through the Gospels to see what had been thought about Jesus in His lifetime. We seem to be able to distinguish three or four different circles of opinion, though, no doubt, opinions fluctuated in them all, and it is clear that to the end Jesus puzzled everyone—those who were brought into closest contact with Him as well as those who judged only by what they heard about Him.

In popular opinion He was a great prophet, inspired by GOD; 'speaking with authority' straight out of His own mind (see *supra*, Chapter III), and having great gifts of healing the sick and driving out the demons of disease.

'A man approved of God unto you by mighty works... which God did by him in the midst of you', 'who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him'. These two descriptions of Him, attributed to Peter, in the early days after His death (Acts ii, 22, x, 38) express an estimate that the Gospels shew was widespread in His lifetime. The common people, the crowds, were impressed in this vague way. Sometimes there was excitement. What He said and what He did roused interest and expectancy about the coming of the Kingdom of GOD; but it was all indefinite, and they waited to see what would happen, impressed, but not convinced that anything would come of it. What is said in the Fourth Gospel (Jn. vi, 15), that Jesus once went into retirement because He was afraid the people would seize Him and make Him a king, is not supported by the earlier Gospels; nor is the statement (Jn. vii, 31) that many were led to think of Him as one who might be the Messiah Himself. Popular opinion expected in the Messiah something quite different from what people in general found in Jesus; but there might be more to come.

It was this feeling that prevailed and formed opinion in what we may call ecclesiastical and political circles, represented in the Gospels by the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, like our clergy and bishops and politicians. As soon as their attention was called to the new Teacher, and they heard of the movement among the people which He caused, some of them went down from Jerusalem to investigate and report, and we can see their watchfulness and suspicion turning into scarcely disguised hostility

(Lk. xi, 53, 54). There had been no hostility on their part to John the Baptizer: why was it roused against Jesus? We can see how it was from the point of view both of the ecclesiastics and of the politicians of the time.

As regards the ecclesiastics, with much of the teaching of Jesus none of the religious leaders of the time could have had any quarrel. But His attitude as a whole was a challenge to the existing religious system. He seemed to claim for Himself an insight into right and wrong without regard to any of the established standards of the religious people of the time. No religious institution was so closely guarded as the observance of the Sabbath. Incidents like those of His healing on the Sabbath (Mk. iii, 1–6 and Lk. vi, 6–11; Mt. xii, 9–14; cf. Lk. xiii, 10–21; Jn. v, 1–18) and letting His disciples pluck ears of corn (Mk. ii, 23–28 and ||s) were breaches of the little rules by which it was maintained; and His saying that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, might be applied to every kind of religious institution and observance. It was the 'thin end of the wedge'. It would cut deep into the system of religion, if you might always be asking what good purpose this or that practice served. It would do away with all 'authority' in religion.

Moreover when they tackled Him on any of these points they always came off worst. Sometimes He would sweep them away with answers like those about the Sabbath, or about the clumsy and malicious charge that He was in league with the devil to cast out devils (Mk. iii, 22–27; Lk. xi, 14–23; Mt. xii, 22–30). At other times He parried their 'crafty' questions so cleverly that they were reduced

to ignominious silence before the people. He was not at all humble to His inquisitors, and they found themselves hoist by their own petard.

A good example of this is the question about the tax that had to be paid to the Romans (Mk. xii, 13–17; Mt. xxii, 15–22). They thought they had got Him on the horns of a dilemma. If He said it was right to pay the tax He would be recognizing the legitimacy of the Roman conquest and rule, their subjection to the powers that be; and He would lose the sympathy of all good Jewish patriots who looked forward to freedom from the hateful foreign usurpation. If, on the other hand, He said it was not right, His opponents could at once denounce Him to the Roman governor as a rebel aiming at insurrection. He quietly turned their attack by saying in effect that there were duties both to governments and to God, and both sets of duties must be observed.

And again He was not always content merely to propound His own ideas about religion and what God wanted of men, and leave them to work. He sometimes pointed His teaching sharply by contrast with the ideas and ways of the religious people of His time, especially the Pharisees. There has never been any impeachment of a class of religious leaders so severe as that in which He pilloried the Pharisees (Mk. xii, 38–40; Lk. xx, 45–47; cf. Lk. xi, 37–54; Mt. xxiii, 1–36), and scholars who know what there is to be known about them have thought His attack on them unfair. They were only, it is said, like the upholders of a religious system in all ages, they honestly thought that all the observances they practised were of value in keeping

people in the way of true religion. The charge of 'hypocrisy' in particular which He brought against them has been held to be unjust. But our Lord's denunciation of them seems to have been made late in His career, when their opposition to Him had hardened and He regarded them as wilfully blind and sinning against light. And this in His eyes was the sin of sins, to pose as religious and yet be devoid of love, to shut your ears to the call of truth and slander one whose religion was purer and deeper than your own. This was the sin that Jesus stigmatized as sin against the spirit of holiness (or the Holy Spirit) which should not be forgiven. But in any case, people who were punctilious in all the conventional observances of religious rites and ceremonies, and yet were uncharitable and censorious towards others, were putting the little things in the place of the great things of Religion; and Jesus had no mercy on them. It was not the observances of organized religion, or careful regard for the institutions of the past, that He condemned. 'These things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone' (Mt. xxiii, 23).[1] But He insisted on putting first things first, and this was just what He said the Scribes and Pharisees were not doing. So in their eyes He was a dangerous teacher who was bringing them into discredit and undermining the religion of the people. If a few among them could appreciate the spiritual quality and inwardness of His teaching, yet as a class they

[1] This saying which is only given by Mt. and as it stands puts the tithing of mint and anise and cummin among the things that ought to be done, can only be taken as indicating the attitude of Jesus to the institutions of Religion in the most general way.

could not; and they wished Him silenced and out of the way. His outspokenness was offensive to themselves and dangerous to the established religion.

Dangerous also He was in the eyes of the politicians. He had a great reputation among the people, many of whom were on the look-out for a chance of throwing off the Roman yoke. They might come to regard Him as a heaven-sent leader, a national Saviour, to restore the Kingdom to Israel. He was always talking about the Kingdom of GOD and professing to see signs of its coming. If He headed a revolt, the politicians would of course have nothing to do with it, and it would soon be crushed. But there would be difficulties with the Roman authorities. Some of the blame would fall, however unjustly, on themselves; and some of the privileges and partial self-government the Romans allowed them might be withdrawn. Or if the revolt, once started, spread widely, as it easily might, the whole nation and Jerusalem itself might be wiped out, and they, the ruling class, who had made terms with Rome, would have lost everything. Jesus was not like the ordinary fanatical leaders of insurrections; but the things He said were disturbing, and the crowds He collected might lose their heads and force Him into a *rôle* He had not intended to play. 'It is better that one man should die rather than a nation perish' was the opinion of the ruling class about Him (cf. Jn. xviii, 14).

Of His own professed disciples we must distinguish between the rank and file and the few who formed a kind of inner circle even among the band who are called the Twelve. The former reflected the opinion of the people

who came in crowds to see and hear Him, attracted and impressed like the others; only different from them in being more closely attached to Him and sharing His daily life, and helping to spread the good news of the coming of the Kingdom, and even sent out by Him to cure diseases in His name. All were puzzled, believing in Him as a prophet sent by GOD and destined to play a great part in connexion with the promised Kingdom. Could He possibly be the Messiah Himself?

Early in the days of His ministry, when His fame was already widespread, John the Baptizer had sent some of his disciples to ask Him the plain question, 'Art thou he that cometh (*or*, "is to come")?' (Read Lk. vii, 18–23; Mt. xi, 2–6 (Q).) But 'he that cometh' does not here mean 'the Messiah'. The question referred to a tradition that before the Messiah was manifested the prophet Elijah would reappear as his forerunner. It does not imply that John thought that Jesus was the Messiah, and the answer that Jesus sent back to him was ambiguous. It was neither Yes nor No. He left it to John to judge for himself, claiming only that the facts shewed that His ministry was being rich in fruits. It was not till a later stage of this ministry, after Peter's confession at Caesarea and the Transfiguration experience, that according to Mark He said the Elijah *redivivus* of the tradition had already come and been disposed of (Mk. ix, 11–13). He meant, no doubt, that John himself had played the part of the prophet who was to precede the Messiah; and Matthew, in copying Mark's narrative here, adds the definite statement that the disciples understood He meant this (Mt. xvii, 10–13). Yet

at the earlier stage, after the messengers from John had gone away, according to the narrative of Q (Lk. vii, 24–35; Mt. xi, 7–19) He had already identified John with the messenger of the Messiah; and Matthew, though not Luke, attributes to Him the plain identification with Elijah, though in the apologetic form, 'And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear' (Mt. xi, 14, 15). The true historical sequence is probably that of Mark's narrative, and Matthew, in inserting the saying here, is anticipating the order of events, though not the train of ideas in the mind of Jesus or the inklings and hopes of at least the inner circle of His immediate followers.

Of these Peter was often the spokesman and it was by him that their inklings and hopes were blurted out when Jesus asked them what people thought about Him, and then what they themselves thought—'But who say ye that I am?' Peter's pent up feelings burst through in the answer 'Thou art Messiah (the Christ)'.[1]

[1] Luke's version of Peter's saying, 'the anointed of God', is no more than an explanation of the Hebrew term for Greek readers; but Matthew, by his addition of the words 'the Son of the living God', puts into Peter's mouth a phrase which belongs to a later stage of Christian thought. Matthew's further addition (verses 17–19), which represents Jesus as welcoming with enthusiasm Peter's profession of belief, and calling him the rock on which He would build His church, and promising him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and conferring on him the power of binding and loosing, is also believed by many students to be unhistorical:—one of the legendary additions in Matthew's Gospel that shew us beliefs current in some circles of the Church at a time a good deal later than the lifetime of Jesus.

Jesus did not repudiate this estimate of Himself—the highest that a Jew could conceive of anyone. But He put it aside as a belief of His intimate disciples that must not be talked of to others: they must tell no one else such a thing about Him: and at once He began to speak of the Messiah in the third person by the title 'the Son of Man' as one who, when he came, would suffer much and be disowned by the ruling classes of his nation and be killed.[1] By this time at all events He foresaw what would be His own fate and He warned His disciples that, if they were right in thinking He was the Messiah, they must begin to revise their ideas about the Messiah; for He would certainly not be the kind of Messiah they expected, and His followers must be prepared to sacrifice everything, even their lives, in His service. These were hard sayings even for the most willing and loyal. (Read Mk. viii, 31–ix, 1; Lk. ix, 22–27; Mt. xvi, 21–28.)

[1] The term 'Son of Man', which Jesus now uses in the third person, was intentionally ambiguous. The people generally would not suppose that He meant Himself. If they understood that He meant the Messiah, they would see that He was giving them an entirely new idea about the Messiah. No one till Jesus had ever conceived of a suffering Messiah who would be rejected and killed when He came. It was too much for Peter, and, impulsive as ever, he at once protested. The words Matthew adds to Mark's account are at least true to life. He could not believe that this was to be the fate of his Master. It was the triumphant conqueror on whom he had pinned his faith. Matthew, from the position of later Christian faith, removes the ambiguity in the third personal 'Son of Man' and says that Jesus began from that time to teach His disciples what would happen to Himself (Mt. xvi, 21).

Down to the end some of His disciples cherished the belief that He would somehow prove Himself Messiah, in spite of His strange teaching and His unwillingness to assert Himself and plainly declare His Messiahship. It is not improbable that Judas Iscariot, who was evidently one of the chief disciples,[1] was one of the most convinced believers, and intended to force His hand and oblige Him to shew the powers He had in reserve. If so, the 'betrayal' which precipitated the issue, inevitable as it probably was, was yet as bad a betrayal as any of which a disciple could be guilty. He had enjoyed his Master's confidence and he would not keep His secret. His remorse, of which the story is told in Mt. xxvii, 3–10 and referred to incidentally in Acts i, 16–19, was not that of a common traitor, but rather of one who realized that he had blundered horribly and could not bear to survive his Master.

That they all forsook Him and fled when He offered no resistance to arrest (Mk. xiv, 50; Mt. xxvi, 56), and that Peter denied all knowledge of Him (Mk. xiv, 66–72; Lk., Mt.), shews on what deaf ears His later teaching had fallen. They were still expecting for Him the kind of success that would justify their hopes.

We are concerned here only with opinion about Jesus in His lifetime, so far as we can learn from Mark and Q what people thought of Him, whether as faith-healer, or as prophet, or as possibly Messiah. But from the stories that were remembered and told about Him we can see what they thought in other ways. We see, for example, that 'the Man

[1] The phrase ὁ εἷς τῶν δώδεκα in Mk. xiv, 10 may mean 'the first of the twelve'.

of Sorrows' would have been regarded as a miserably inadequate description of Him. A man of ideals must always feel the pain of the world as things are, and Jesus produced the impression that He had boundless sympathy, suffering with the suffering, sharing in the sorrowful experiences of others, ready to help to His utmost, open-hearted and accessible to everyone in trouble. Their desire to come to Him, or for Him to come to them, was the only introduction needed. Our Gospels were not composed till a halo of reverence had surrounded Him that sometimes veils the natural sense of the facts that are recorded, but it is clear that He was not crushed by the pain of the world. To Him it was GOD's world. And if He was sometimes despondent He was more constantly buoyant and hopeful. If He was a Man of Sorrows He was also a Man of Joys. 'Weep with them that weep and rejoice with them that rejoice' is the gist of one of His remembered sayings (Lk. vii, 31, 32; Mt. xi, 16, 17); and what is told about Him shews that men and women found Him a congenial companion in their happy experiences and realized His joy in the beauty of Nature and the beauty of human affections, family life, friendship, thoughts, and words.

He left no writings. As it has been said, 'He is only recorded to have written once, and then it was on sand' (see Jn. viii, 6). But He was an artist in the making of phrases. His mere words have inspired a great literature, and this kind of inspiration was part of what people recognized in Him. 'Never man spake like this man'. He seemed to have unerring insight into men's minds and feelings; He knew what was in man; and His words and similes opened out

to them the truth about themselves and about God. It must be true. So it has been said that if there be God at all, He must be like the Father-God in whom Jesus believed. No other kind of God is credible. And so those who knew Him felt He was in close touch with God. They divined instinctively something about Him of the sacred, the holy, the God-like. If they found that in His company the best in themselves was brought out and strengthened, and comfort and courage came to them as they caught something of His confidence in God and the victory of good; yet sometimes it was the feeling of awe in His presence that prevailed. Such a saying as that of Peter (Lk. v, 8), 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord', even if it was prompted by wonder at the draught of fishes, expresses the kind of feeling He often aroused. It is disclosed quite incidentally in Mark's narrative when, with no reference to any special occurrence, it is said (Mk. x, 32), 'And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed (or full of apprehension); and they that followed were afraid'. It is His own disciples who are apprehensive and afraid. No account of what people thought about Him in His lifetime is true unless it does justice to the evidence that, in spite of all His obvious humanity and intimate fellowship with them, they felt there was more in Him than they could grasp and understand, some unknown 'quantity' or 'quality' which, while it won them to Him, yet at the same time baffled them and sometimes awed them and almost frightened them away. It was not only that the gracious teacher and warm-hearted and hopeful friend

could also be the stern and austere Master who could be withering in denunciation and demanded the 'impossible' from His friends and followers, though He said it was not impossible but just what was to be—'Ye shall be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt. v, 48). There was a veil of mystery surrounding Him, suggesting much more than met the eye or found expression in act and word; and it was to account for this mystery and suggestiveness, part of the actual experience of those who knew Him in His lifetime in the world, that the later explanations and doctrines of the Church were devised.

CHAPTER TEN

THE STORIES OF THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS. THE CHURCH AND THE SACRAMENTS

1. The Stories of the Birth and Childhood of Jesus (Lk. i, 5–ii, 52 and iii, 23–38; Mt. i, ii)

In contrast with Mark, Luke and Matthew aimed at giving as complete a Life of Jesus as they could. So they begin with a genealogical tree and stories about His birth and early years.

These stories are reserved for this place in our study of the Gospels because, properly speaking, they form no part of the story of the actual life of Jesus. There is no sign of any knowledge of them during His lifetime. There is no sign that the beliefs which they indicate had any influence in creating faith in Jesus among His earliest followers and adherents. That faith was the result of what they saw of the life and character of Jesus, of His vision and grasp of God and that other 'unknown quantity' that seems to elude analysis. The reasoned faith of Christians in Jesus as divine has probably always depended on evidence as to what He actually was in His life in the world, and the place He has held in men's minds and hearts ever since, rather than on the beliefs as to the way in which He came into the world that these stories express. Nowhere in the rest of the New Testament is any argument drawn from

them to support the teaching given about Him. It is possible to believe in Jesus as St Paul believed in Him, or to hold the faith of St John in Him as the incarnate Word of GOD, without believing in these stories.

They describe a wonderful origin for the person believed to be unique among men. The two stories of His Birth, given respectively by Luke and Matthew, seem to be independent of each other, and the two genealogies prefixed to them seem also to be independent of each other. They agree in the chief particular that Jesus had no human father, but was born out of the natural course of human generation. How far back behind the composition of these two Gospels this tradition goes we have no means of knowing. Wherever the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were circulated Christians must have accepted the story as true, and it became the settled belief of the Church and no doubt helped to create and to confirm faith in Jesus as divine.

It is not likely that the story originated with either of the authors of these Gospels. Each of them treats the main point as one of the things he had to tell, though each handles it in his own way.

Matthew, seeing in the circumstances a fulfilment of the prophecy of Is. vii, 14, yet traces the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, although Joseph is not regarded as His natural father, and appears to be concerned to establish the fact that, according to Jewish law, He was the legitimate son of Joseph.

It is Luke's Gospel (chap. i, 5–ii, 52) that supplies the familiar details, and they are all narrated by him in a

poetical setting, conspicuous for delicacy and beauty. They are, with some of the incidents narrated by Matthew, the only descriptions we have of the history of the early years of Jesus. The narrative begins with the story of the birth of John the Baptizer, the precursor of Jesus. John's birth too is described as out of the normal course, just as the Jewish chroniclers, convinced that their race were the chosen people of GOD, described the birth of their ancestor Isaac as out of due course and brought about by the special immediate action of GOD (Gen. xviii, 11; cf. Heb. xi, 11).

It is no doubt possible, with full acceptance of all that modern science has contributed to knowledge of the regularity of the 'laws' of Nature, or the ways in which GOD works in the world, nevertheless to believe that at rare intervals there are special interventions of divine activity that bring about results which in the regular course of Nature, so far as it is known, could not be produced. No one can affirm that 'miracle' of this kind is impossible, and as regards these stories many Christian scholars today are content to rest in this position. There are many also who, though they would not regard belief in the miraculous birth as fundamental to their faith in Jesus, yet accept the belief on the ground that it is more reasonable to believe that One who was admittedly unique among men had an origin as man that was unique.

A different position is occupied by others today who hold that it is not to the history but to the poetry of the Christian religion that these stories belong; that they have the style and manner of legend and poetry, and should be

regarded as attempts to express the mystery that hung round Jesus—the something inexpressible in plain prose that ordinary men and women felt about Him. It is what has been styled above the 'unknown quantity' or 'quality' that remains when we have studied all the facts of His life that we can measure up and bring into relation to our ordinary experience. The Jesus who had created so great an impression by His Life and Death, and after His death had become a more living and greater power than He had been in His lifetime, must, it was thought, have been different from other men from the beginning. People felt there was something about Him that needed further explanation; and these stories of the circumstances of His Birth and Infancy supplied what seemed to be lacking to account for His being the kind of person He was. He was the kind of person of whom, in those days, such stories could be told quite naturally and believed. That, according to this view of the question, is the historical value that they have for us, and, like the myths of Plato, they suggest what is real and true, though in the form of poetry and picture.

2. The Church and the Sacraments

The question has been put, whether Jesus intended to found a Church. The idea of founding a Church occurs only once in the Gospels and that in a passage in Matthew which has no parallel in Mark or Luke and is generally believed to represent a tradition that originated at a later time when Peter was regarded as having had a place

among the apostles of more authority than he actually had (Mt. xvi, 17–20).[1]

What the evidence of the Gospels shews us plainly is that from the beginning Jesus gathered round Himself a small group of men as His 'disciples'.

Twelve of these, whose names are given, He is recorded to have 'chosen' or 'appointed' (Mk. iii, 13–19; Lk. vi, 12–19; and the list of names, Mt. x, 2–4). Luke adds that He named them 'apostles' and Matthew calls them 'the twelve apostles'. The word is used elsewhere of messengers, or envoys, or representatives, and Mark, who does not use the name in this place,[2] implies it when he says that Jesus appointed them 'that they might be with him and that he might *send them forth* to preach, and to have authority to cast out Devils' (cf. also Lk. ix, 1 and Mt. x, 1). Jesus took pains to bind these men as closely as possible to Himself and to one another, and to teach and train them to share His beliefs and ideals. We have seen that a good deal of what He was remembered to have taught is said to have been addressed to them in private.

One occasion is recorded on which He formally sent them out (Mark says 'by two and two') on a tour of preaching and gave them instructions as to their conduct on their mission (Mk. vi, 7–13; Lk. ix, 1–5; Mt. x,

[1] As regards 'primacy' over the Church, it must be noted that any that there was, was exercised in the early Church not by Peter but by 'James, the Lord's brother' (Acts xv, 19), though Peter is the spokesman of the other apostles at first (Acts i–v).

[2] He only uses the name when mentioning their return from the preaching tour referred to below (Mk. vi, 30).

1–14).[1] Luke also relates the sending out of seventy others on another occasion, two and two, and the return of the seventy to Him at the end of a successful tour (Lk. x, 1–24). Seventy was regarded as a perfect number, and nothing more is known about these seventy, though, at a much later time, names for all of them were provided. The number twelve may have been chosen as being the number of the tribes of Israel, and the tradition that after the apostasy of Judas Iscariot another (Matthias) was appointed in his place (Acts i, 15–26) shews that the twelve were regarded as occupying a position of special importance in the whole body of disciples who had 'companied' together 'all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out' among them.

Jesus did, then, certainly, form at least the nucleus of what we should call a society, of which He was the head and the centre, with an inner circle of those who were most closely associated with Him. Of this inner circle the twelve were pledged particularly to active service in His lifetime, and afterwards had special honour and authority among the rest of the disciples or believers. The Acts of the Apostles shews what was believed at a later time to have been their place in the early community of Christians, but the urgency with which St Paul pressed his own claim to be regarded as an apostle (see especially Gal. i, ii and 1 Cor. ix) is the best possible proof of the esteem in which 'apostles' were held and of the authority conceded to them.

[1] The much expanded version of the instructions in Mt. x, 15–42 seems to be for the most part made up by a collection of sayings recorded separately on different occasions by Mark and Luke.

Beyond such training of the twelve as Jesus gave them there is no sign in the Synoptic Gospels that He attempted any organization of a society or instituted any new rites or ceremonies to be observed by His disciples in His lifetime. Afterwards there is no doubt that believers were admitted as members of the new society by Baptism, and Acts and St Paul's Epistles shew what Baptism was believed to give them.[1] But that this 'Christian' Baptism began after the lifetime of Jesus appears from the facts (1) that there is no mention of it in the instructions to the twelve or the seventy when they were sent out on their missions, and (2) that in the one passage in the New Testament in which Jesus is said to have ordained the practice it is to the risen Jesus that the command to baptize is ascribed (Mt. xxviii, 16–20).[2] At a much later time it was argued that Christian Baptism was into the death and resurrection of Jesus (as St Paul described it) and so could not have existed in His lifetime.[3]

Again, as regards the practice of the Lord's Supper, the

[1] See especially Acts ii, 37, 38, 41, xxii, 16, and Rom. vi, 2–11, and ch. vi of *The Earliest Christian Church*, *supra*, p. 184 ff.

[2] The silence of the Synoptic Gospels on the subject is not outweighed, as regards the actual historical facts, by the statements in Jn. iii, 22, 26, which indeed, at least as regards Jesus Himself, the writer, or the editor, of the Gospel immediately afterwards corrects (iv, 1, 2). The author of this Gospel has throughout a conception of the relation of Jesus to John the Baptizer different from the picture given in Mark and Luke. Matthew represents John as hesitating to baptize Jesus: in this Gospel he does not baptize Him.

[3] See Tertullian, *Concerning Baptism*, § 11 (Eng. Tr. A. Souter, S.P.C.K.).

account of the Last Supper that is given in Mk. xiv, 12–25 contains no suggestion that anything like that Supper would ever be known again until 'the day' of 'the kingdom of God'. Matthew (xxvi, 26–29) only a little expands some of Mark's phrases. Luke's account of the chief incident of the Supper (Lk. xxii, 14–18) is different, but equally devoid of any suggestion of repetition—for verses 19 and 20 are not part of the Gospel as it was published, but were inserted into it by copyists from 1 Cor. xi, 23–25. So the writers of these Gospels who give us so much of the history of the Life of Jesus and of His teaching do not tell us that He intended His actions at that Supper to be regarded as the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Yet the earliest information we have about Christians (in St Paul's Epistles some twenty years later than the Crucifixion and in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles) shews them as already an organized body of believers in Jesus as the Messiah (the Christ), directed by apostles, and with two specific sacred practices of their own, namely baptism into the name of Jesus (or Christ) and 'the breaking of the bread' or the Lord's Supper: and for both these practices they believed they had the authority of Jesus Himself.

We cannot fully explain these facts; but we cannot ignore them. We are concerned at present only with the Gospels, and it is enough for us to note that if Jesus prescribed no definite organization for His disciples, yet by what He was and said and did He laid the foundations for the organization of the Church and the ministry and sacraments, which began at once to come into being.

He created the conditions in which this organized body

of people and these institutions originated. No one at the time could have foreseen how they would develope, and what they would become. The later history of Church and ministry and sacraments depended from time to time on the political and social institutions and all the changing conditions of the world in which the Church grew up and became an organized world-wide society. So far as we can tell from the evidence of the Gospels it was not part of the mission of Jesus, as He conceived it, to prescribe any hard and fast rules, or any definite constitution, for a new Christian society or church, to be binding on it for all time. He brought it into being with Himself as centre of it, and He said that in the Spirit He would always be with His disciples. But, in the light of the principles and ideals He had set before them and the way in which He had lived among them, He left it to them age after age to fashion their constitution for themselves. It is in this sense that it is true to say that He founded or instituted the Church and its order of ministry and sacrament.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

H. Latham. *Pastor pastorum.* (Deighton, Bell and Co., Cambridge, 1890.)

Alice Gardner. *History of Sacrament in Relation to Thought and Progress.* (Williams and Norgate, 1921.)

A. L. Lilley. *Sacraments.* (Student Christian Movement, 1928.)

J. F. Bethune-Baker. *The Faith of the Apostles' Creed.* (Macmillan & Co., 1918.)

CAMBRIDGE: PRINTED BY
W. LEWIS, M.A.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Books are to be returned on or before
the last date below

19 NOV 1975

14 OCT 1981

LIBREX —

Nazarene Theological College
B12879

270.1
AUTHOR Binns, L. Elliott
B614r
TITLE The Rise of the Christian Church
1141
Date
Name
14 OCT 1981 Jim allan Rncl.

270.1
B614r
1141
Binns
BRITISH ISLES NAZARENE LIBRARY COLLEGE